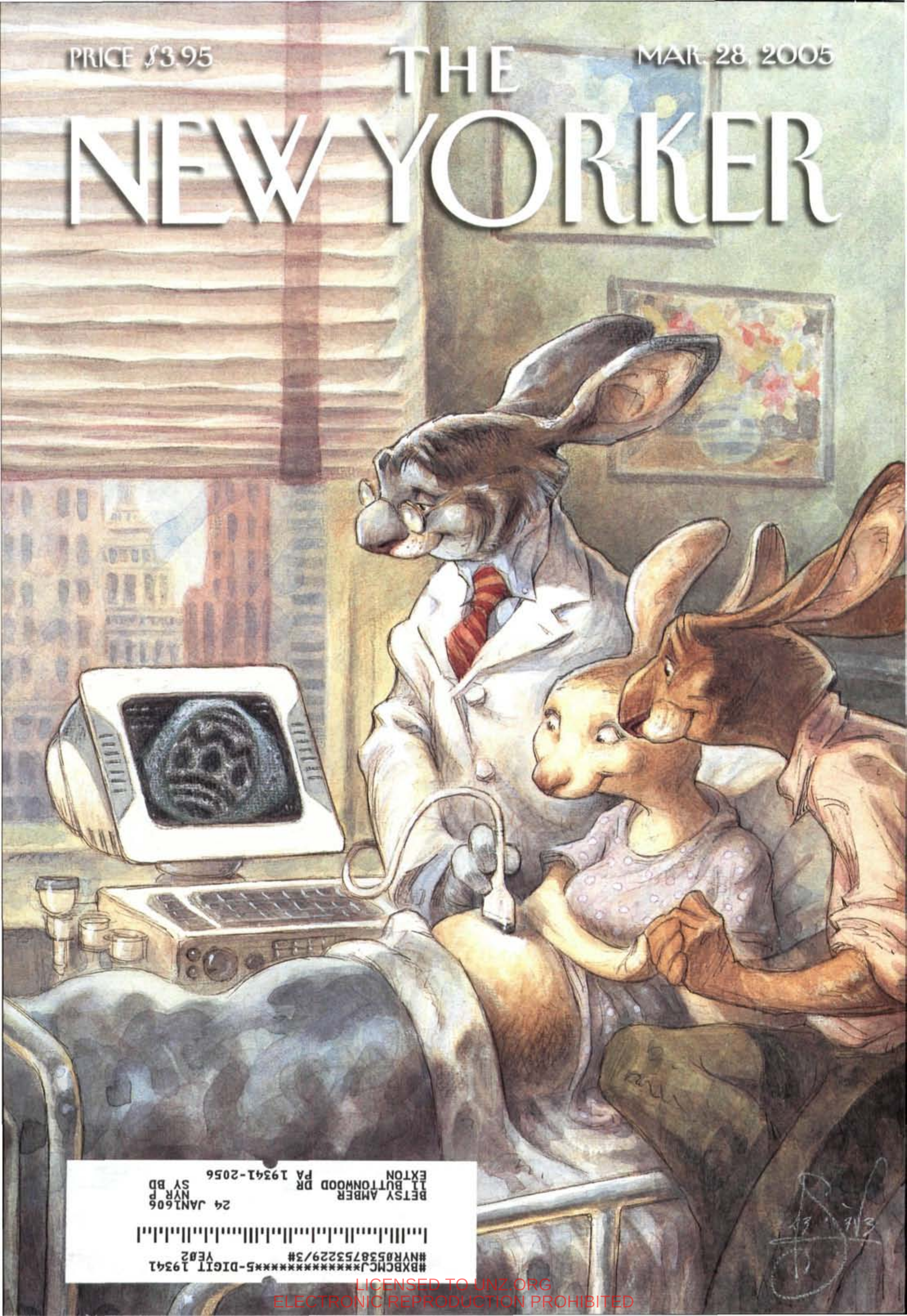
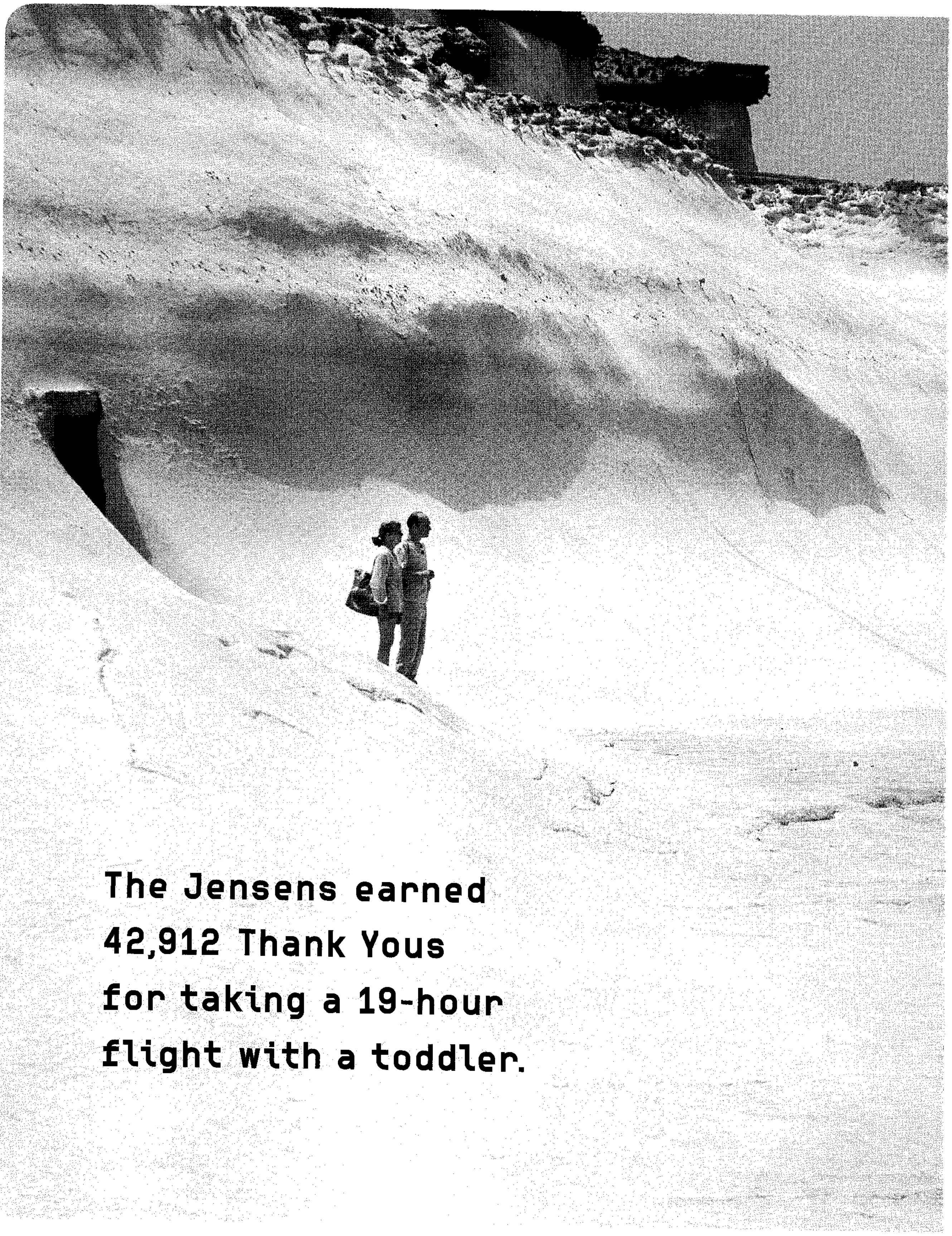
PRICE $3.95

THE NEW YORKER

MAR. 28, 2005



#BXBCMCJ************5-DIGIT 19341
#NYR0538753229/3# YE02
BETSY AMBER 24 JAN1606
11 BUTTONWOOD DR NYR P
EXTON PA 19341-2056 SY BD


The Jensens earned 42,912 Thank Yous for taking a 19-hour flight with a toddler.

Card description applies only to the PremierPass-Elite Level card and does not describe the no-fee PremierPass card. *Select merchants are defined as supermarkets, drug stores, gas stations, commuting and parking merchants. Redeem 100% of your purchase points at any time. When you redeem flight points, you must use an equal or greater number of purchase points. ©2005 Citibank (S.D.), N.A. and Citibank USA. Citi, Citi with Arc Design and Live richly are registered service marks of Citicorp. Citi PremierPass, the Thank You design, Thank You Points and Now that's a card you can count on are service marks of Citicorp.

citi

Live richly.®

Introducing the

Citi PremierPass℠ credit card,

the only card that earns
you Thank You rewards points
for the airline tickets you buy
and the miles you fly.

Earn points on any airline. On top of
your frequent flier miles. Redeem on
any airline, with no blackout dates.

Plus, get points the
old-fashioned way:
just for using your card.

Add in double points for
purchases at select merchants,*

3 Airline Tickets:	$3,762
Total Miles Flown:	39,120
3 Pair Sunglasses:	$30
Thank You Points℠:	42,912

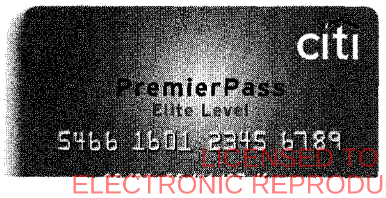
and that's a whole lot of Thank Yous.

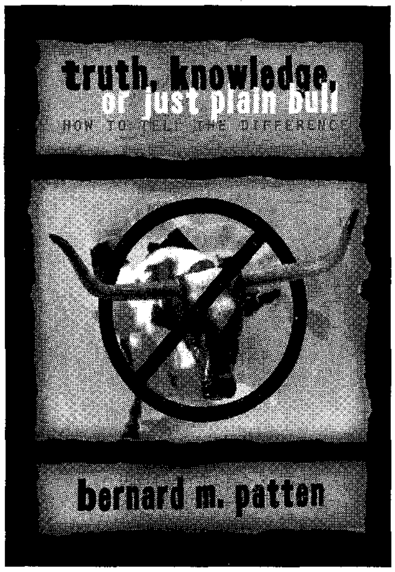
Now that's a card you can count on.℠

Call now: 1-800-353-CITI.

citicards.com

"Thank You"℠




truth, knowledge, or just plain bull
HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE
bernard m. patten

A Handbook of
Practical Logic and
Clear Thinking

**TRUTH, KNOWLEDGE,
OR JUST PLAIN BULL**
How to Tell the Difference
Bernard M. Patten
363 pp • ISBN 1-59102-246-0 • PB • $20

"...Patten doesn't minimize the mental effort required to master clear thinking, but his own clear writing and down-to-earth tone make it as painless as it can be to strengthen your ability to reason and see the faults in the reasoning of others."
—Publishers Weekly

"...a terrific addition to stuffy logic courses, helping to show the relevance of sound principles to students' lives. But it is just as suitable for the person who reads for pleasure and intellectual stimulation."
**—Richard T. Hull,
Professor Emeritus of
Philosophy at the
State University of
New York at Buffalo**

Available through all major
bookstores or directly through
Prometheus Books
59 John Glenn Drive • Amherst, NY 14228
800-421-0351 • Fax: 716-691-0137
www.prometheusbooks.com

THE NEW YORKER

MARCH 28, 2005

6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
21 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Trust-fund truths; popstrology.

David Owen 26 OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS
Playing Out of the Snow
Winter golf in the city.
Larry Doyle 33 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Disengagements
Ken Auletta 34 ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS
The New Pitch
The future of advertising.
Margaret Talbot 40 PROFILES
Supreme Confidence
Justice Antonin Scalia's opinions.
David Gates 56 FICTION
"A Secret Station"

THE CRITICS

John Lahr 68 THE THEATRE
"Spamalot."

BOOKS

John Updike 71 *"Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography."*
77 Briefly Noted
Louis Menand 78 *Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go."*
Alex Ross 80 MUSICAL EVENTS
"Kafka's Trial," "Lysistrata."
Anthony Lane 82 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"The Ring Two," "Oldboy."

POEMS

Michael Ryan 53 "No Warning No Reason"
Deborah Garrison 60 "Pink and White"

COVER *"Easter Egg," by Peter de Sève* THE BACK PAGE *"Rational Exuberance," by Roz Chast* DRAWINGS *Michael Shaw, Tom Cheney, Carolita Johnson, Drew Dernavich, C. Covert Darbyshire, Michael Maslin, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Frank Cotham, Michael Crawford, Danny Shanahan, Jack Ziegler, Leo Cullum, Matthew Diffee, Christopher Weyant*

www.newyorker.com

Dear Ketel One Drinker
Please excuse us for interrupting your read, but needs must.

Ketel One Vodka distilled from wheat. ©2005 Imported by Nolet Spirits U.S.A., Aliso Viejo, CA. All rights reserved. 40% ALC/VOL. www.KetelOne.com

EUROPE
DELUXE RIVER CRUISES
FROM $1,898
including airfare*

- Cruise the Legendary Rivers of Europe
- 7 to 21 Days Aboard Europe's Newest and Most Deluxe River Cruise Ships
- Visit Grand Cities and Medieval Towns
- Shore Excursions & All Meals Aboard Ship Included
- Experience Art, Wine and Music Theme Cruises

CHINA
BEST VALUE TO CHINA
FROM $1,798
including airfare*

- 11 to 21 Days. Visit Beijing's Great Wall or Xi'an - Home of the Terra Cotta Warriors
- Cruise the Yangtze River & Visit the Three Gorges with Victoria Cruises
- Deluxe Hotels, Shore Excursions & Meals Aboard Ship All Included
- Cultural Highlights & Evening Performances

UNIWORLD

SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR CALL
800-365-3076
www.uniworld.com

*Prices listed for Europe from NYC/BOS. China is listed from LAX/SFO. Air taxes/government fees and port charges additional.

CONTRIBUTORS

Margaret Talbot ("Supreme Confidence," p. 40) is a staff writer and a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation.

Ken Auletta ("The New Pitch," p. 34) writes the magazine's Annals of Communications. His book "Backstory: Inside the Business of News" is available in paperback.

Ben McGrath (The Talk of the Town, p. 22) is a staff writer.

David Owen ("Playing Out of the Snow," p. 26) is the author of several books about golf, including "My Usual Game." His latest book is "Copies in Seconds," a history of the Xerox machine.

Larry Doyle (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 33) is a writer living in Los Angeles.

Glen Baxter (Sketchbook, p. 47) is an artist living in England. He will have an exhibition of large color drawings at the Flowers gallery in New York in June.

David Gates (Fiction, p. 56) has published two novels and a collection of short stories, "The Wonders of the Invisible World."

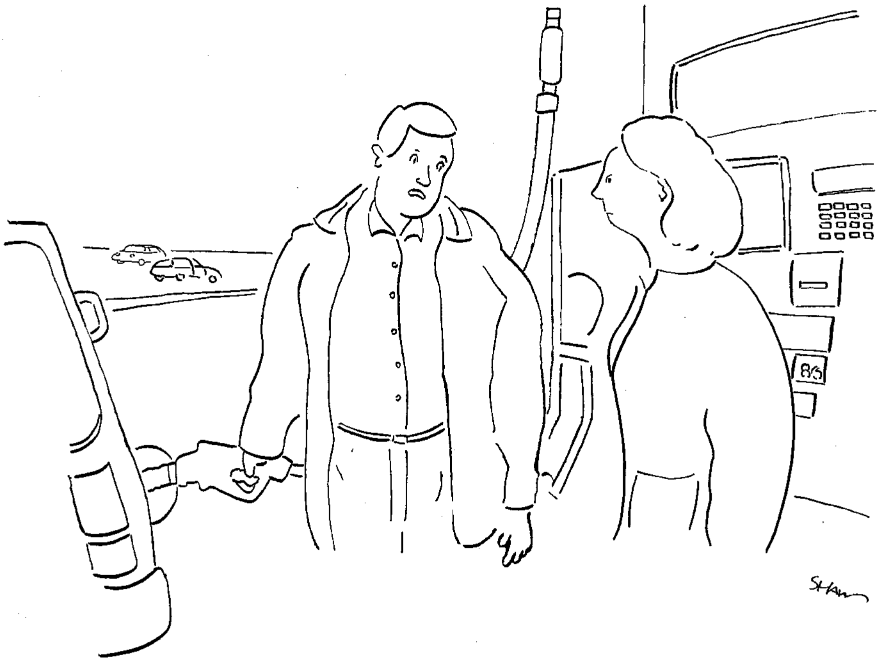
Michael Ryan (Poem, p. 53), whose "New and Selected Poems" came out last year, is the recipient of the 2005 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award.

Deborah Garrison (Poem, p. 60) is the author of "A Working Girl Can't Win and Other Poems."

John Updike (Books, p. 71) is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker* of fiction, poetry, and criticism.

Louis Menand (Books, p. 78) is a staff writer and the author of "The Metaphysical Club."

Roz Chast (The Back Page, p. 84) contributes regularly to the magazine. Her latest book is "The Party, After You Left," a collection of her cartoons. ♦



"Now I wish the war had been about the oil."

THE MAIL

GOOD NIGHT, DAN

Like the rest of us, Dan Rather certainly has his faults, and they are well documented by Ken Auletta and by Rather's colleagues at CBS News ("Sign-Off," March 7th). Still, after devoting his life to honest journalism, the professional hanging he is receiving seems tragic and unfair. The public's loss of confidence in our media has occurred not because of Rather and the work of his generation but because of the group that is replacing them. Should CBS ultimately follow the lead of cable's collection of babbling shameless self-promoters who masquerade as journalists, I for one will long for the days when Rather watched over the House of Murrow as best he could.
David Hemenway
New York City

With friends like Don Hewitt, Mike Wallace, and Walter Cronkite, does Dan Rather need any enemies? I was surprised that these gentlemen had so little grace when asked by Auletta for their opinion of someone with whom they worked for so long. I have followed Rather's career for many years and have always been struck by his honesty and fairness. He deserved better from his so-called colleagues.
Charles Fleming
Tucson, Ariz.

HUNTER'S WORLD

If Hunter S. Thompson thought that F. Scott Fitzgerald considered "calling 'Gatsby' 'The Death of the Red White and Blue,'" as Louis Menand writes in his remembrance of Thompson, he was in error (Comment, March 7th). The alternative title that Fitzgerald proposed, at the last minute, was "Under the Red White and Blue." Whatever its defects as a title, it can be given more interpretations than the one that Thompson apparently gave it.
Roger Lathbury
Professor of English
George Mason University
Fairfax, Va.

As one of Hunter Thompson's more skeptical editors at *The National Observer* (which discovered him in 1962 and published his creative reportage from the Caribbean), I should not have been surprised to read in Menand's piece that Hunter typed out pages of F. Scott Fitzgerald to get a feel for writing in the manner of Fitzgerald—his model and hero. Probably so, but at other times it was Hemingway whose pages he said he typed to get the feel of writing *his* way, and who was said to have been his model and hero. It's fitting that postmortem accounts of Thompson's career have turned up such discrepancies. As Hunter maintained, he was after a Greater Truth, and "Who cares about these kinds of facts?" At his best, though, he was one hell of a writer.
Roscoe C. Born
Sykesville, Md.

WHAT STRIPPERS THINK

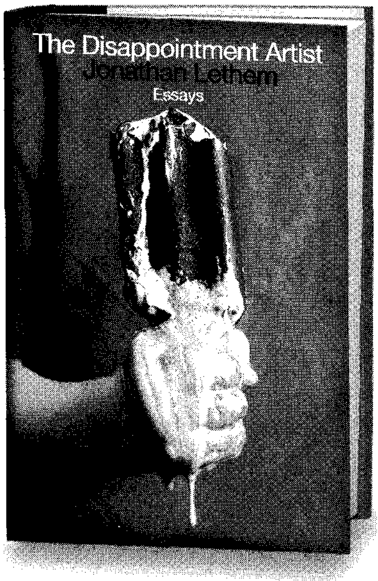
Francine du Plessix Gray's quote from Lorenz Hart's lyric for a stripper with cultural aspirations in the musical "Pal Joey," cited in her review of books on striptease, needs a slight correction (Books, February 28th). It is "I was reading Schopenhauer last night / Zip! And I think that Schopenhauer was right," not "I *don't* think that Schopenhauer was right." Otherwise, her piece brought me back to the time I spent in Montreal in the nineteen-forties, when the Gayety Theatre featured the best ladies in the business—Lili St. Cyr, Sally Rand, and Peaches. I thought Lili St. Cyr was the most beautiful woman in the world.
Robert Raymond
New York City

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

Lethem at Large

Essays from the acclaimed novelist on obsessions, memories, and pop culture moments



"In a collection as warmly engaging as it is ruminative, **Jonathan Lethem shows himself to be as much a master of the personal essay as he is of contemporary fiction."**
—PHILLIP LOPATE, author of *The Art of the Personal Essay*

Doubleday

Available wherever books are sold
Also available on CD from Random House Audio
www.jonathanlethembooks.com

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

For expanded events listings, please visit www.newyorker.com/goingson.

THIS WEEK
A REAL CORKER

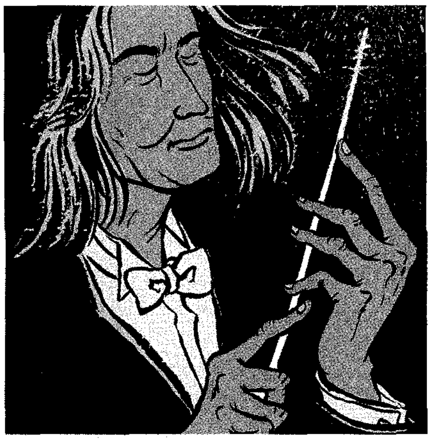
Jonathan Nossiter, the director of the new documentary "Mondovino," believes in the sensual pleasures of a good wine, but he also has a didactic point to make. A Bourgogne Rouge made by a small family-owned vineyard, he argues, is equal if not superior to a similar wine mass-produced by a large corporation. The film explores the globalization of the industry by stitching together a set of interviews with corporate types, independent winemakers, and even wine experts such as Michel Rolland and Robert Parker, and it was an official selection at last year's Cannes Film Festival. (Film Forum, opens March 23; see Movies.)

GOOD CONDUCT

Eighteen years ago, the New York Philharmonic engaged the young American conductor Kent Nagano to lead a slate of concerts. Since then, Nagano has earned the top posts at the German Symphony Orchestra Berlin, the Los Angeles Opera, and the Montreal Symphony. This program, his first with the Philharmonic since his début, is typically esoteric, featuring music by two composers who stand at the chronological edges of the orchestral repertory: Bach and Messiaen ("Illuminations of the Beyond," which the orchestra premièred in 1992). (Avery Fisher Hall, March 24-26; see Classical Music.)

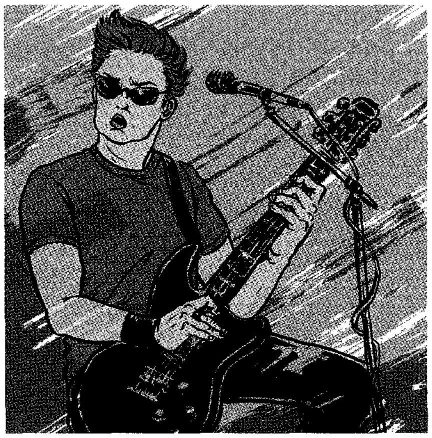
QUEENS LOGIC

The hard-rock band Queens of the Stone Age went through a rough time last year, when the front man, Josh Homme, had a very public falling-out with his bandmate and lifelong friend, the bassist Nick Oliveri. But Homme regrouped with new personnel and released a record, "Lullabies to Paralyze." This week, the "Lullabies" tour comes to town; the opening band is Homme's side project, the Eagles of Death Metal, for which he switches to drums. (Webster Hall, March 24; see Night Life.)



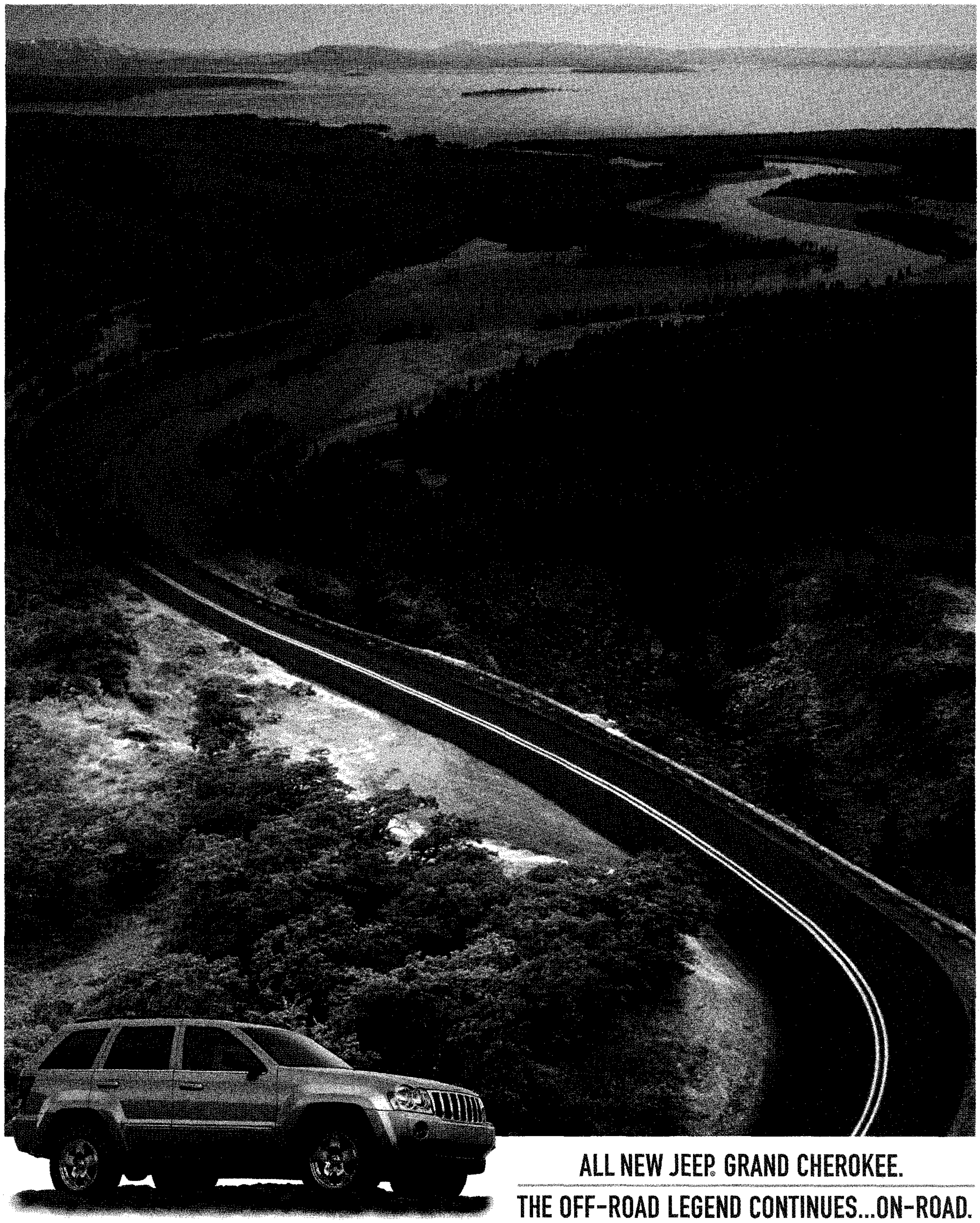
Kent Nagano conducts the New York Philharmonic.

Wine, both global and local, is the subject of the documentary "Mondovino."



YUKO SHIMIZU

Josh Homme and Queens of the Stone Age perform at Webster Hall.



ALL NEW JEEP® GRAND CHEROKEE.

THE OFF-ROAD LEGEND CONTINUES...ON-ROAD.

Now you can make the most of every journey, no matter what the terrain. The new Trail Rated® Jeep Grand Cherokee features a 330-hp 5.7L HEMI® V8,[*] the most powerful engine in its class,[†] an Electronic Stability Program,[‡] and Quadra-Drive II,®[*] our most advanced four-wheel-drive system ever. Visit jeep.com

Jeep®

BUCKLE UP

Chrysler Financial

Jeep, Trail Rated, and HEMI are registered trademarks of DaimlerChrysler Corporation. *Only available on Limited 4x4 model.
†Based on 2004 *Ward's* Middle/Sport Utility Segment and published industry information. ‡Available.

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ALL SHOOK UP
The spirit of Elvis lives on in a musical comedy set to his songs. Christopher Ashley directs. Two previews on March 23. Opens March 24 at 6:30. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

BLESSING THE BOATS
In a one-man show that blends music, spoken word, and griot-style storytelling, the Harlem-born poet Sekou Sundiata describes his battle with a life-threatening illness. Directed by Rhodessa Jones. Opens March 24 at 8. (Apollo Theatre Sound Stage, 253 W. 125th St. 212-307-7171.)

DOUBT
John Patrick Shanley's well-told tale about possible sexual abuse in a Catholic school moves to Broadway. Doug Hughes directs. In previews. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

FAUST IN LOVE
The second installment of Target Margin Theatre's three-part adaptation of Goethe's classic stars David Greenspan as Mephisto, Eunice Wong as Gretchen, and George Hannah as Faust. Adapted by Douglas Langworthy. Opens March 23 at 8. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-358-3657.)

GOD HATES THE IRISH:
THE BALLAD OF ARMLESS JOHNNY
A satirical farce by Sean Cunningham about the odyssey (away from Northern Ireland, then back) of a demoralized young man who has no father, no arms, and no prospects. With twelve original songs by Michael Friedman, of the Civilians. Directed by Will Frears. Previews begin March 23. (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl., west of Seventh Ave. 212-868-4444.)

GOING TO ST. IVES
Lee Blessing's new drama about an African dictator and his conscience-stricken mother has its première at Primary Stages. Directed by Maria Mileaf. In previews. Opens March 29 at 7. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

HOT 'N' THROBBING
The final production of the Signature Theatre Company's Paula Vogel season is a drama about a woman who writes erotic screenplays to support her children. Directed by Les Waters. In previews. Opens March 28 at 7:30. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA
A musical based on Elizabeth Spencer's novella about a mother and daughter travelling through Italy in 1953. Book by Craig Lucas; music and lyrics by Adam Guettel. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

MOONLIGHT AND MAGNOLIAS
A new play by Ron Hutchinson shows the tensions that raged during the writing of the screenplay for "Gone with the Wind," in 1939. In previews. Opens March 29 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

ON GOLDEN POND
James Earl Jones and Leslie Uggams star in a revival of Ernest Thompson's play about a family reunion at a cabin in the Adirondacks. In previews. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

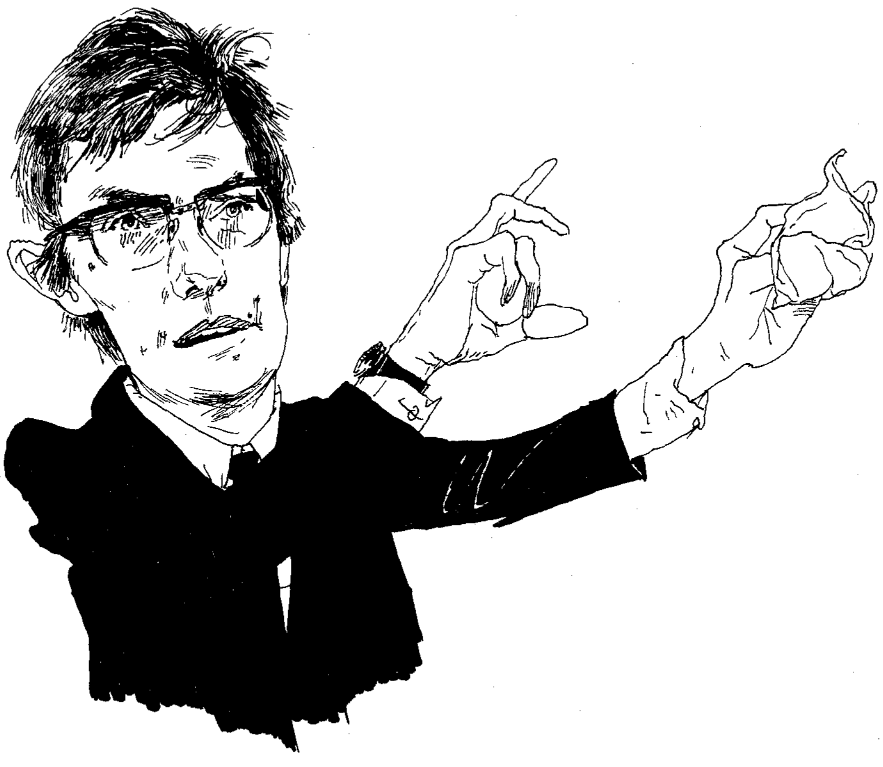
THE PILLOWMAN
In a drama by the Irish playwright Martin McDonagh, an official interrogates an author who has written disturbing stories about children. With Jeff Goldblum and Billy Crudup. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

STEEL MAGNOLIAS
Delta Burke, Christine Ebersole, and Frances Sternhagen lead the cast in a revival of Robert Harling's play about the relationships between a close-knit group of women in the South. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THIS IS HOW IT GOES
An interracial love triangle is the subject of a new play by Neil LaBute that stars Amanda Peet, Ben Stiller, and Jeffrey Wright. Directed by George C. Wolfe. In previews. Opens March 27 at 7. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AFTER ASHLEY
Gina Gionfriddo is a gifted young writer with unusual psychological insight that is, unfortunately, not yet matched with narrative skill. Her portraits of Ashley, a transgressive, childish mother (the excellent Dana Eskelson), and her troubled teen-age son, Justin (Kieran Culkin, in a subtle performance), are powerful. But when the mother's murder elevates the son into the national spotlight, he goes into a rebellious tailspin, and the play turns into a tedious satire on the sensationalism of the press. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)



James Urbaniak, in Will Eno's "Thom Pain (Based on Nothing)," at the DR2.

ANDY FRIEDMAN

ALTAR BOYZ
In this lampoon of the boy-band phenomenon, the lyricist-songwriters Gary Adler and Michael Patrick Walker hit below the belt without being vulgar in MTV-ready songs that are infectiously catchy. Five young studs—Matthew, Mark, Luke, Juan, and Abraham—make up the soul-cleansing, hip-thrusting (mostly) Christian pop group the Altar Boyz. The hunky Scott Porter (Matthew) looks like Justin Timberlake and radiates faux-pious smarm, while Tyler Maynard, a not-so-crypto gay band member, evokes Renée Zellweger with his all-out belting, hoofing, and grinning. All the Boyz are terrific, and their spoofy synchronized break dancing, choreographed by Christopher Gattelli, would be funny even without the merciless score. Directed by Stafford Arima. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

DESSA ROSE
Sherley Anne Williams's novel about an antebellum-era friendship between a runaway slave (LaChanze) and an abandoned wife (Rachel York) has become a musical. Book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, music by Stephen Flaherty. Choreographed and directed by Graciela Daniele. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS
A gleeful translation of the film to the musical stage, with a good-natured score by David Yazbek and a comic engine revved by Jeffrey Lane's perky book. The penny-ante American con man Freddy Benson (Norbert Leo Butz) joins forces with the swank European hustler Lawrence Jameson (the charming John Lithgow). The musical owes a lot of its twinkle to the cunning and the command of its agile director, Jack O'Brien, who has had hits in recent years with "The Full Monty" and "Hairspray." "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" makes it a trifecta of triumphs. (3/14/05) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE FOREVER WALTZ
The poet Glyn Maxwell weaves an Orpheus story for the digital age, in an ethereal production directed by Elysa Marden. On a black, gallerylike stage, the anxious Mobile (Joshua Spafford) berates a dead cell phone. Soon he's joined by a mocking underworld guide (Barry Abramowitz), and together they summon Mobile's lost love (Jennifer Kathryn Marshall), a smiling cipher who has no memory. Intelligent, but out of touch with the beautiful simplicity of the original myth. (Workshop Theatre, 312 W. 36th St. 212-695-4173.)

THE GERMANS IN PARIS
A new comedy by Jonathan Leaf ("Pushkin"), set in 1843, imagines the friendship between Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, and Richard Wagner. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-239-6200. Through March 26.)

THE GLASS MENAGERIE
Jessica Lange and Christian Slater star in a revival of Tennessee Williams's drama, directed by David Leveaux. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

GORILLA MAN
A deadpan, disjointed new rock musical by Kyle Jarrow ("A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant") uses Lenny Bruce-style shock comedy to tell the tale of a gorilla boy (Jason Fuchs) whose mother (Stephanie Bast) kicks him out of the house. With live piano by Jarrow, duets by hootchy-kootchy girls (played by Bast and Nell Mooney), and lusty solos by Bast. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-477-5288. Through March 27.)

INKY
In Rinne Groff's satire, a slender Slavic nanny nicknamed Inky (Jessi Campbell) arrives at the home of a materialistic eighties couple who aren't equipped to care for their newborn baby or grade-school daughter. Inky has the maternal routine down pat but likes to spend her private moments reciting the rhyming patter of Muhammad Ali and using her

swift left hook to level playground bullies. The ironies here are heavy-handed, but the play has a cheeky appeal as a revenge fantasy in which the humble prevail. (Julia Miles Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200.)

JABU
Elizabeth Swados creates a Dada valedictory on the life, times, and premature death of the enfant terrible Alfred Jarry, whose 1896 play "Ubu Roi" mocked every convention of the French classical stage. As musicians produce a beautiful dissonance from their perch above the stage, Jarry (Matt Wilson) runs amok in cafés and on the battlefield while his loyal friend Madame de Rachilde (Danielle Levanas) tries to shield him from ruin. Meanwhile, his literary creations Ma and Pa Ubu take on a life more vivid than their author's; everything they touch turns into vaporous, spastic comedy. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT
Stephen Adly Guirgis's woeful courtroom drama, which presents the case for Judas, feels rushed, undisciplined, and unfocussed. What's particularly disappointing about this new production, presented by LAByrinth, with whom Guirgis has written three very promising plays, "In Arabia, We'd All Be Kings," "Jesus Hopped the A Train," and "Our Lady of 121st Street," is that it lacks rhythm in the staging as well as in the writing. Philip Seymour Hoffman directs. (3/15/05) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

ORSON'S SHADOW
In a riveting drama that reimagines a moment in 1960 when three theatrical titans—Sir Laurence Olivier (John Judd), Orson Welles (Jeff Still), and the critic Kenneth Tynan (Tracy Letts)—collaborated on a botched production of Ionesco's "Rhinoceros," the playwright Austin Pendleton dissects the political agendas of each of the egotists and spices up the proceedings with a dash of matrimonial chaos. There is a vivacious depth to the bad behavior on display here, and bravura acting. Directed by David Cromer. (3/21/05) (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200.)

PLAY WITHOUT WORDS
In Matthew Bourne's Olivier-winning theatrical production, inspired by Joseph Losey's 1963 film "The Servant" (which had a screenplay by Harold Pinter), a sly, brooding butler and his smug employer play sadistic power games, using the butler's fiancée as a pawn. With an original jazz score by Terry Davies. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through April 3.)

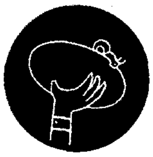
ROMANCE
The giddy sophistry of David Mamet's new play (well directed by Neil Pepe) shows how farce can work both as a metaphor for the caprice of nations and as a release from it. In a New York City courtroom, a distracted judge (the hilarious Larry Bryggman) tries to focus on the stonewalling tactics of a defendant (Steven Goldstein) while the defense attorney (Christopher Evan Welch) complains about the prosecution's aggressive cross-examination: "What is it, a 'charade,' a 'vaudeville'?" In Mamet's hands, it's burlesque. (3/14/05) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

SPAMALOT
The musical inspired by the film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" stars David Hyde Pierce, Tim Curry, and Hank Azaria. Directed by Mike Nichols. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING)
James Urbaniak gives a bravura performance as the title character in this delicately scripted monologue by Will Eno, about a man troubled by thought or, rather, by the thoughts that become particularly troubling once you've suffered a breakup. Ably directed by Hal Brooks. (2/28/05) (DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
The wracking tension of spelling-bee competition is turned into rollicking ironic fun in this new musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and Rachel Sheinkin, in which each speller hams up the role of a different schoolyard stereotype. Directed by James Lapine. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

TABLES FOR TWO



KITTICHAI
60 Thompson St. (212-219-2000)—This self-consciously chic spot in the hotel Sixty Thompson, where asymmetrically coiffed twenty-somethings rub shoulders with dazzled, gawking tourists, has a creepy sophistication—in the lounge, preserved orchids in jars line the walls like fetal pigs awaiting dissection, mutated goldfish with bulbous protrusions on their foreheads inhabit a gilded cage-cum-aquarium, and a plantain frond hangs morbidly on the bar. The more glamorous dining room features spotlighted square banquettes and a shallow reflecting pool with floating candles, over which suspended orchids hover like butterflies.

In such a setting, the food itself could have easily been an afterthought, but the chef Ian Chalermkittichai—who was lately the executive chef at Bangkok's Spice Market—is as adept in the kitchen as he is at showmanship. Steel Thai characters mounted along one wall make clear his culinary ambitions, quoting a sixteenth-century poem written for a Thai king that promises heaven to anyone who tries the fiery curry. Chalermkittichai explains, "It's, you know, orgasmic." Recently, the seared foie gras was offset by a tart pineapple marmalade, and the sea bass, marinated in yellow salted beans, was succulent, if a bit cloying. Although much of the food seemed best for those with a sweet tooth, the sugar-glazed chicken lollipops—basically little boneless drumsticks—were also crunchy and spicy. Ending with dessert seems almost beside the point, and there are some missteps: the sweet tapioca pearls looked like pebbles from the bottom of the aquarium and tasted like canned fruit cocktail.

For all the worldly airs, Kittichai's staff—as gorgeous and attenuated as their fashionable customers—were oddly jittery. One evening, an eager waiter hovered just behind diners' chairs, occasionally leaning in close to ask if everyone was comfortable. Perhaps he should have taken advantage of the bar's excellent offerings—a few sips of the lemongrass-and-ginger cocktail could soothe even the most jagged nerves. (Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Entrées $14-$27.)

—Andrea Thompson

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?
Edward Albee's sparring George and Martha are played by Bill Irwin and Kathleen Turner in a revival of the 1962 drama. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

WOMAN BEFORE A GLASS
A one-woman show by Lanie Robertson about the expatriate art patron and mistress of modernism Peggy Guggenheim. As played by Mercedes Ruehl, Guggenheim, whom the Venetians called "the last duchess," is a grande dame in Dame Edna bat glasses. Ruehl is a powerful, sexual woman of a certain age, whose nervy, wisecracking energy turns Guggenheim's domineering self-absorption into a form of congeniality. Directed by Casey Childs. (3/21/05) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

DANCE

"IPHIGENIA"
In the director Theodora Skipitares's restaging of the Euripides tragedy, five-foot Bunraku puppets are attached by taut strings to the actors' heads, shoulders, waists, and knees. The cast members, led by Carolyn Goelzer (as Clytemnestra), speak from behind hoods and veils. On a stage deprived of human faces, the puppeteers' voices gain unusual power, and the only unveiled character—Iphigenia—becomes a magnet for the eyes. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. March 24-27 at 7:30. Through April 3.)

PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE
The company makes its New York début with three works: "Hungry Heart . . . 'We All Have One'!!," by the British choreographer Derek Deane, set to music by Bruce Springsteen; "Sting/ING Situations," Kevin O'Day's ensemble improvisations on Sting songs; and "7th Heaven," by Dwight Rhoden, which is accompanied by Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. March 29 at 8. Through April 3.)

STEPHEN PETRONIO COMPANY
The loose-limbed Stephen Petronio, who has just turned forty-nine, performs his signature works in his company's twentieth-anniversary retrospective program at the Joyce. "MiddleSexGorge" (1990) now looks like a fever dream of the eighties; to the beat of the British band Wire, the coldly seductive dancers pool and scatter like mercury. The virtuosic chaos continues in "Lareigne" (1995) and in "Prelude" (2000). "Bud," a new male duet from an upcoming collaboration with the singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright titled "Bloom," is just as headlong but more tender. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. March 22-26 at 8 and March 27 at 2 and 7:30.)

JÉRÔME BEL
Making his New York début, the French choreographer sets his experimental dance-theatre piece "The Show Must Go On" to a cycle of eighteen pop songs. As tracks by Queen, Lionel Ritchie, Tina Turner, and Céline Dion play at high volume, Bel's eighteen calm, overly literal dancers do what the songs tell them to do. Bel can be witty and wry, but what he really wants is for the audience to notice the inherent artifice; he's not afraid to pull the old empty-stage trick. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. March 24-26 at 7:30.)

MAIMOUNA KEITA AFRICAN DANCE COMPANY
Since its founding in 1983, the Brooklyn-based dance school has become a hub for African dance in New York. Its annual concerts, the culmination of a five-day dance-and-drum conference, are a major event. This year's program, "Sili Djiguiba" ("Path of Hope"), which showcases both the adult and children's companies, is devoted to West African dance and includes a guest appearance by the Malian dance master Djenaba Sako. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. March 26 at 8.)

"6 DEGREES OF JAZZ"
Cheerful, lively dances (and three premières) by Jetté Performance Company fuse modern, jazz, funk, and balletic movement. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. March 24-27 at 8.)

DZUL DANCE
The choreographer Javier Dzul shows his passions for Martha Graham, Hispanic culture, and the songs of the Colombian chanteuse Lucia Pulido in new and repertory work in his season at the Merce Cunningham Studio. (55 Bethune St. 212-239-6200. March 24-25 at 9 and March 26 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

THE BLACK CROWES
After a three-year hiatus that included low-profile solo projects from the brothers Robinson—that's Chris on vocals and Rich on guitar—the Southern-rock stalwarts resume active duty. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. March 22-23, March 25-27, and March 29-30 at 8.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
The San Francisco Jazz Collective, led by the saxophonist Joshua Redman, plays the music of John Coltrane. (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. March 25-26 at 8.)

STEVE VAI
Vai, one of the preëminent hard-rock guitarists, has lent his six-string sorcery to everyone from David Lee Roth to John Lydon. His new album, "Real Illusions: Reflections," has high concepts to spare, but they never get so high that they won't inspire his fans to

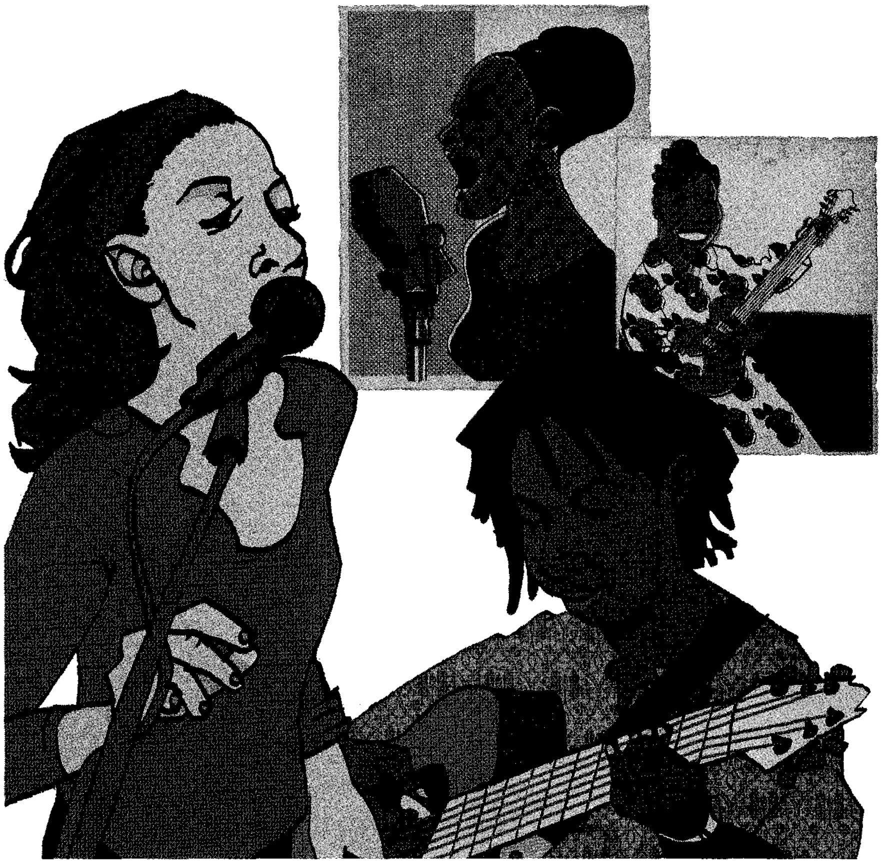
shamelessly play along on air guitar. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. March 26 at 8 and 11:15.)

RUTHIE FOSTER AND OLLABELLE
Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a fire-fingered, guitar-wielding gospel singer, and Clara Ward, widely recognized as one of the finest gospel soloists ever, both died in 1973. The Texas blues singer Foster and members of the roots-and-gospel group Ollabelle (whose lead singer, Amy Helm, is the daughter of the drummer and singer of The Band, Levon Helm) pay tribute to the pair. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3303. March 29 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—March 23: The incendiary bluesman **Buddy Guy.** March 25: **Toots & the Maytals,** whose 1968 hit, "Do the Reggay," gave ska, dub, rock steady, and every other substratum of Jamaican music one all-encompassing name. But Frederick (Toots) Hibbert isn't living in the past. He just won a Grammy for his group's latest album, "True Love," which features contributions from a slew of stars, including Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Willie Nelson, Bootsy Collins, and Ryan Adams.



Amy Helm and other members of Ollabelle join Ruthie Foster at Merkin Concert Hall.

JASHAR AWAN

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—March 23: The young rascals in the **Old Crow Medicine Show** deliver old-time country music as it's seldom heard. Their heartbreaking, plunky ballads and unfastened fiddle tunes are charged with the youthful vigor of punk rock. March 25: The **Kaiser Chiefs.** The latest U.K. outfit to send English music journalists into a frenzy, the Chiefs serve up ripe guitar pop.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—March 23: The "One Tree Hill" Tour. The **Wreckers, Michelle Branch,** and **Jessica Harp,** from the hit TV series. March 25-26: The **Dropkick Murphys** are burly Bostonians who fuse an intense pride in their Irish heritage with a garrulous brand of no-nonsense punk rock.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8778)—March 23: The singer-songwriter **Keren Ann** celebrates the U.S. release of her album "Nolita." March 29: The Algerian-born, France-based guitar virtuoso **Pierre Bensusan** blends jazz, Celtic, classical, and North African melodies with fingerpicking and alternate tunings into a dreamy, impressionistic, yet contemporary sound. Later on March 29: The English neo-soul duo **Floetry.**

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—March 24-25: The stoner guitar quartet **Dead Meadow** has a new album, "Feathers," that shows surprising moments of lightness. With **Jennifer Gentle.** The name sounds like that of an earnest singer-songwriter from the Midwest, but it actually belongs to two Italian guys from Padua. The singer and guitarist Marco Fasolo and the drummer Alessio Gastaldello, along with various comrades, have a curious penchant for psychedelic pop of the sixties. Jennifer Gentle's Stateside début album, "Valende," is a head-spinning trip through the sweet sounds of that era. March 26: The **Section Quartet** plays string versions of Led Zeppelin, Tool, and Radiohead. Tonight they're performing two shows. The early one is a rendition of Pink Floyd's classic album "Dark Side of the Moon." The nightcap is a variety show that features guest vocalists.

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—March 24: A high-energy, multimedia Purim party with **Balkan Beat Box,** a group led by the drummer Tamir Muskat, of Big Lazy, and the saxophonist Ori Kaplan, of Gogol Bordello and Firewater, and featuring musicians from North Africa, the Middle East, and, yes, the Balkans. March 26: The London-based Brazilian performance duo **Tetine** (Eliete Mejorado and Bruno Verner) presides over a funk-carioca d.j. party, filling the club with the down-and-dirty beats of Rio's favelas. March 27-28: **Floetry** (see Joe's Pub).

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—March 25: The eccentric singer-songwriter and beloved cult favorite **Robyn Hitchcock** returns to New York. Half Dylanesque troubadour, half psychedelic surrealist, Hitchcock plays deeply skewed pop that veers from the charmingly accessible to the truly bizarre. March 30: **Pencilgrass** is a seven-piece outfit from Miami that plays very personal and highly danceable progressive R. & B.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—March 24: The **Queens of the Stone Age** and **Eagles of Death Metal** (see This Week). March 26: Beloved by skater kids and loathed by graying purists, **New Found Glory** drives another nail into the casket of punk rock. Their music is squeaky clean, their fashion sense notwithstanding.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through March 26: The vocalist **Tierney Sutton** and her trio. Sutton's most recent album, "Dancing in the Dark," is a homage to Frank Sinatra, but she's prepared a new show of standards for this engagement.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—March 23-26: Three-tenor jokes aside, **Michael Brecker, Dave Liebman,** and **Joe Lovano** are in the top echelon of present-day saxophonists. Brecker and Lovano may have the name recognition, but Leibman, now balancing his celebrated soprano work with brawny tenor playing, is every bit their equal.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Instrumental virtuosos aren't always a serious lot; **James Moody** delivers warped one-liners and surrealist anecdotes as easily as he does serpentine bebop lines on the saxophone and flute. A fleet alto saxophonist and a pensive soprano player, Moody produces his most significant work when he turns to the tenor sax. On that horn you can hear all that he's absorbed, from his days as a featured soloist in Dizzy Gillespie's late-forties big band, in Moody's own funky ensembles of the fifties, and back with Dizzy again as an integral component of the trumpeter's small group in the sixties. Since then, he has continued to investigate the improvisational byways of modern jazz. Moody's here all week, celebrating his eightieth birthday with a few friends. Opening night, March 22, finds him in the company of **Cubop,** which unites the saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera and the legendary *conguero* Ray Barretto. March 23: Moody is joined by the vocalist **Roberta Gambarini** and the trumpeter **Roy Hargrove.** March 24: The trombonist **Slide Hampton,** the trumpeter **Claudio Roditi,** and the saxophonist **Frank Wess** sit in. March 25: Moody, along with the saxophonists **Nathan Davis** and **Quamon Fowler,** plays the music of Grover Washington. March 26: The producer **George Wein** is the m.c. for the evening. Expect special guests. March 27: The pianist **Kenny Barron** closes things out.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through April 9, **Betty Buckley.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Through March 27: The saxophonist and composer **Ted Nash** brings in his unconventional Odeon ensemble, which finds room for tuba, violin, and accordion.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Jimmy Smith, the man who practically invented the organ trio, died recently, but **Joey Defrancesco** is determined to keep his spirit alive. He pays tribute to him March 23-27. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

GAZES

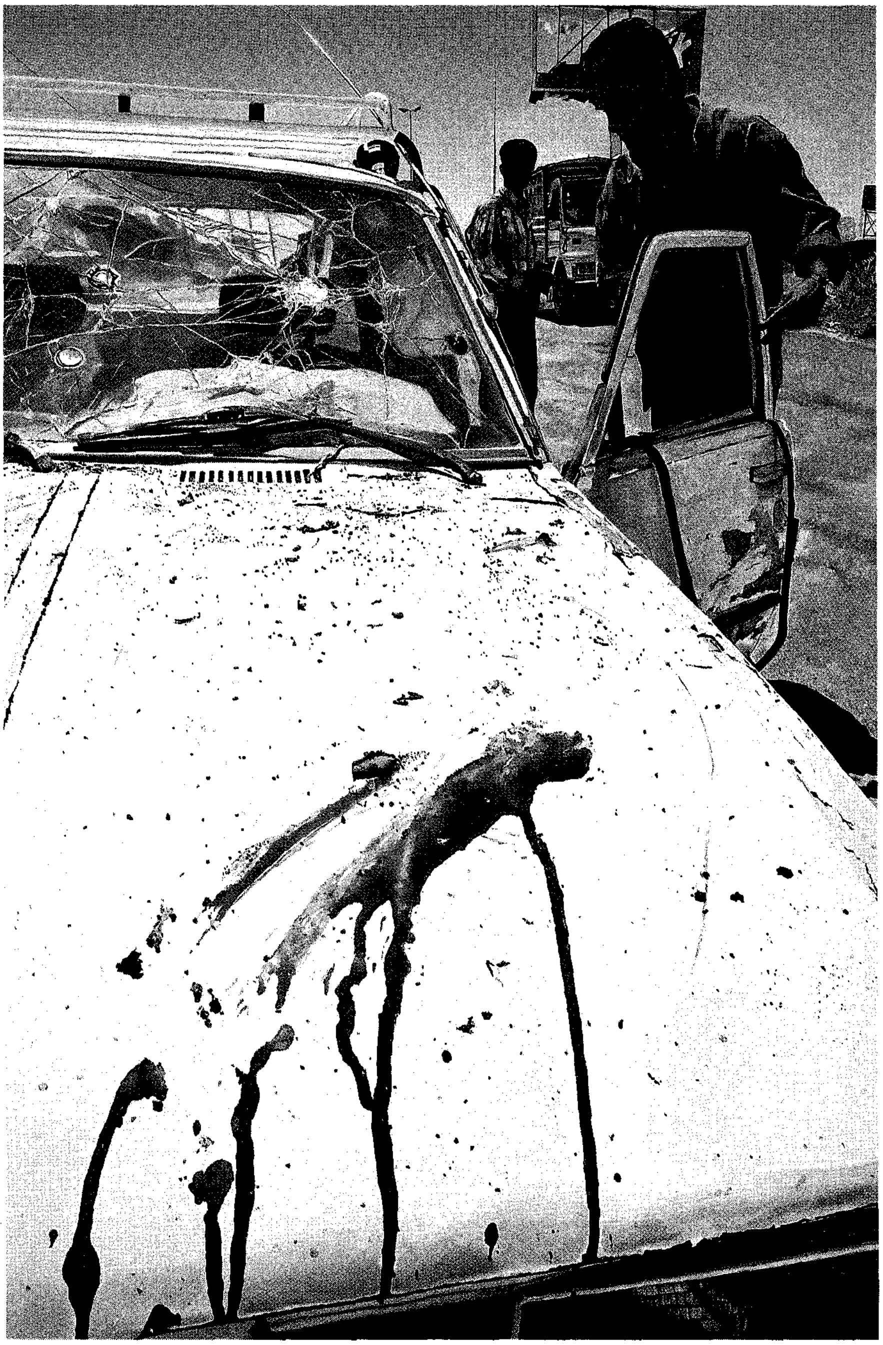
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC RIBOUD

FROM MARCH 23RD TO APRIL 30TH

AT HERMÈS, 691 MADISON AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR, NEW YORK - 212-751-3181
10:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday, Thursday 10:00 am to 7:00 pm
Hermes.com/exhibitions

HERMÈS
PARIS

Leica



ART MACABRE *The ever-strategic Damien Hirst's latest bid to conquer New York is cheeky, even for him. Having made only limited headway here with pickled animals, vitrined pharmaceuticals, and other epic gimcracks, Hirst, like Alexander the Great at Gaugamela, goes straight for our local strong point: painting. He paints—or, anyway, has assistants paint—big canvases in mousy-colored, generic variants of Photo-Realism. (Luc Tuymans is evoked, without the Belgian's irritable delicacy.) The macabre, mostly medical subjects include a nearly beautiful autopsy room that stirs faint carbolic odors in the mind. Hirst seems out to expose effective painting as a cheap trick, which he brings off with ease and disdain.—Peter Schjeldahl*

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—March 24-27: The **Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra.** The Grammy-winning big-band composer and arranger Schneider is an ingenious orchestrator (she's a Gil Evans disciple) whose thick textures still allow plenty of space for some choice soloists.

SMOKE
2751 Broadway, between 105th and 106th Sts. (212-864-6662)—March 25-26: The **Russell Malone** quartet. Having paid his dues with the likes of Harry Connick, Jr., and Diana Krall, the graceful guitar stylist Malone steps out on his own.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through March 27: The **Tom Harrell** quintet. The trumpeter has established the kind of intimate rapport with the saxophonist Jimmy Greene that Harrell himself once had with Joe Lovano. Harrell also flaunts a distinctively dark horn style and a compelling book of originals. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The retrospective exhibition **"Diane Arbus: Revelations."** Through May 30. ♦ **"Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640): The Drawings."** Through April 3. ♦ Duccio's "Madonna and Child," circa 1300, a triumphant recent acquisition for the Met. Through May 15. ♦ **"Left Unfinished by Albrecht Dürer."** Three painted panels, believed to have been destined for an altarpiece but abandoned by Dürer in 1505, are reunited here for the first time in centuries. Through March 27. ♦ **"From Filippo Lippi to Piero della Francesca: Fra Carnevale and the Making of a Renaissance Master."** Scholars have been slowly unearthing the oeuvre of Fra Carnevale, an artist little known aside from his mention in Vasari's "Lives of the Artists," over the course of the past century; this exhibition presents what is now known of the lost master's paintings, alongside samples of his contemporaries' work. Through May 1. ♦ **"The Kano School: Orthodoxy and Iconoclasm."** Through June 5. ♦ **"Heritage of Power: Ancient Sculpture from West Mexico, the Andrall E. Pearson Family Collection."** Through April 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Thomas Demand."** The German artist Demand offers crisp photographs of cut-and-glued, life-sized mockups of unpeopled environments; they may be generic (copy shop, bathroom) or historically fraught (idealistic postwar German architecture, the kitchen of a Saddam Hussein hideout). The effect is less fool-the-eye than haunt-the-mind; Demand's delicate, austere, somehow heavyhearted labors balance aesthetic wonderment with philosophical pessimism. He suggests that, like photographs, our assumptions about reality are paper thin. Through May 30. ♦ **"Contemporary Voices: Works from the UBS Art Collection."** Through April 25. ♦ **"Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape"** surveys contemporary landscape design with elaborate architectural models, virtual tours, video, and photographs. Through May 16. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"The Eye of the Storm: Works in Situ by Daniel Buren"** opens March 25. ♦ **"The Hugo Boss Prize 2004: Rirkrit Tiravanija."** Tiravanija's "Untitled 2005 (The Air Between the Chain-Link Fence and the Broken Bicycle Wheel)" takes viewers' experience of television from passive to active with a demonstration of how to build a low-power TV station. A large glass cube holds a transmitter, which passes a signal from a length of chain-link fence to a Duchampian receiver, a bicycle wheel mounted on a stool, about twenty-five feet away. The staticky picture is picked up on a little set inside the plywood room below. The gallery walls are entirely covered in relevant texts—F.C.C. application forms, policy explanations, the First Amendment, footnotes, and directions for replicating the (illegal) project at home. Through May 11. ♦ **"Recent Acquisitions: Slater Bradley's 'Doppelganger Trilogy.' "** Through May 22. ♦ Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism—Paris in the teens and twenties of the last century was a hotbed of painterly experiment. If the canvases in **"School of Paris,"** culled from the rich holdings of the Guggenheim's permanent collection, look less than fresh after almost a hundred years of appearing on tote bags and jigsaw puzzles, it is not the fault of the painters, who were eagerly smashing barriers and inventing new styles. An Eiffel Tower here, a train embankment or mournful demimondaine there, and Picasso, Modigliani, Delaunay, Gleizes, Severini, Malevich, and Léger devise a world. Through May 3. ♦ Two other surveys of twentieth-century innovation drawn from the museum's permanent collection, **"Expressionism"** and **"Paul Klee,"** open March 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

DAMIEN HIRST, "SUICIDE BOMBER (AFTERMATH)," 2004-2005

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Cy Twombly: Fifty Years of Works on Paper."** Through May 8. ♦ **"Tim Hawkinson,"** a mid-career retrospective of the California artist's diverse inventions. Works on view include clocks made out of a soda can, a manila envelope, or hair; robots that tap out percussion for hymns or write Hawkinson's signature over and over; and a silvery "elephant skin" made from felt, foam, and aluminum foil. Scale varies wildly, from tiny bird skeletons made out of nail clippings to the football-field-size "Überorgan," an automated bagpipe housed in the sculpture garden at 590 Madison Avenue, at Fifty-seventh Street. Through May 29. ♦ **"Ellen Gallagher: DeLuxe,"** a series of embellished images based on advertisements from mid-century African-American magazines. Through May 15. ♦ **"Political Nature,"** a modest gathering of prints and drawings by Walton Ford, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Frank Moore, and Stephanie Syjuco. Through March 27. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Basquiat,"** a retrospective of the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through June 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

ASIA SOCIETY
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—**"Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India,"** an exhibition presented jointly with the Queens Museum of Art. Through June 5. ♦ Its silly title aside, **Michael Joo's "Bodhi Obfuscatus (Space-Baby)"** is a moving meditation on art, vision, and spirituality. Joo borrowed an ancient sculpture from the museum's collection—a circa-third-century Buddha from the Gandharan region of modern-day Pakistan—and outfitted it with a steel halo of lights and miniature cameras. The cameras scan the figure's quiet face, transmitting images to monitors and projectors on the gallery walls. In the stillness of the darkened space, the mind is awakened; a multitude of changing perspectives emerge, but none of them match, exactly, what is seen with the naked eye. Through May 1. ♦ **"Imperial Elegance: Chinese Ceramics from the Asia Society's Rockefeller Collection."** Through May 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—**"Surrealism U.S.A."** is a superb roundup of paintings and sculptures from the nineteen-thirties and forties surveying modernism's version of punk. Through May 8. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"Audubon's Aviary"** pairs forty of the artist's original watercolors with ornithological models and mounts, video footage of the different birds, and an audio presentation of birdcalls. Through April 3. ♦ **"Thomas Paine: Patriot and Provocateur."** Through April 24. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Greater New York 2005,"** a co-production with the Museum of Modern Art, gathers a hundred and fifty artists from around the city who have emerged in the past five years. Through Sept. 26. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India,"** an exhibition co-presented with the Asia Society. Through June 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

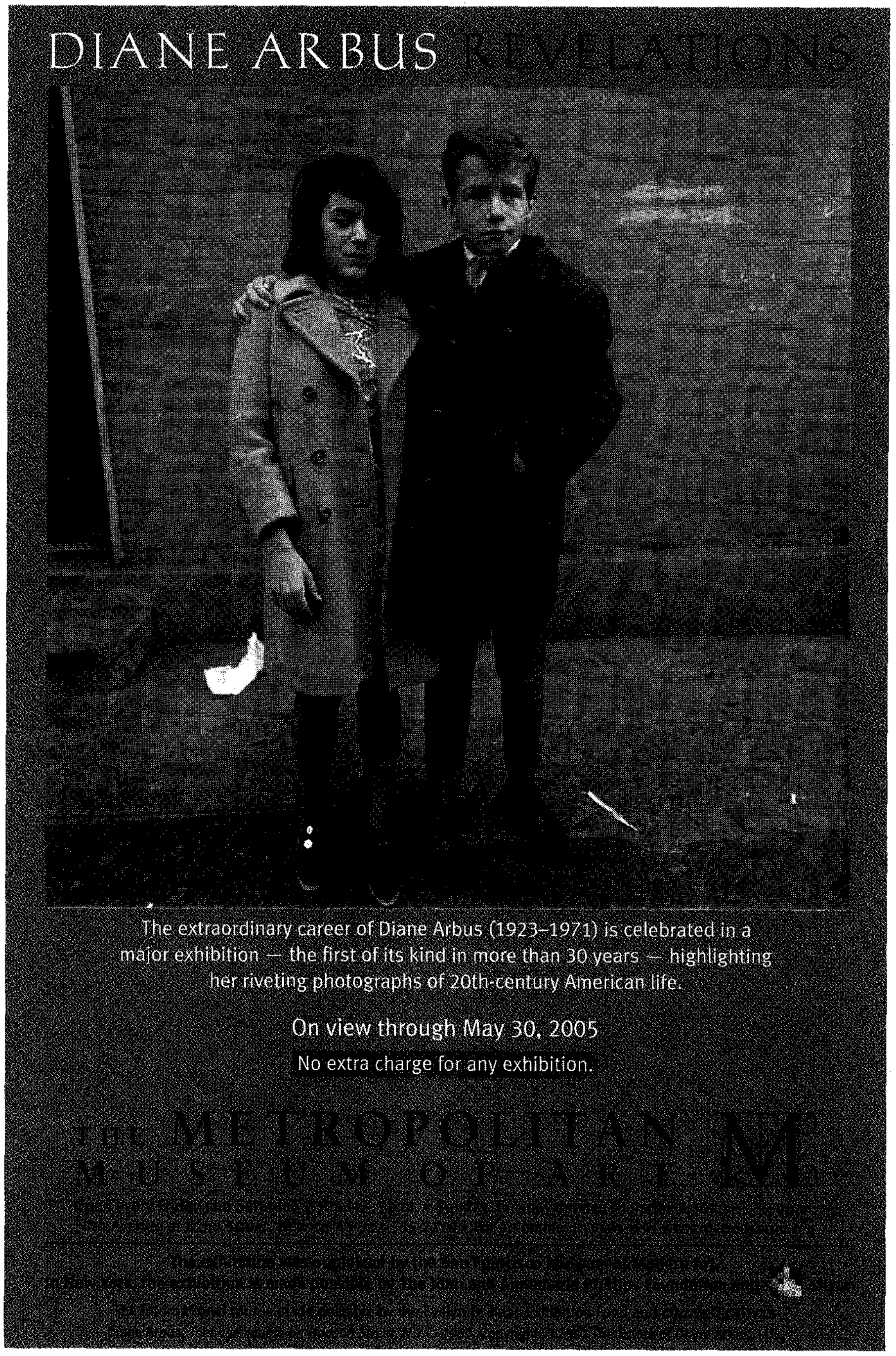
Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JULES DE BALINCOURT
The apocalypse comes to "Our Town" in de Balincourt's new paintings. A red-walled prison yard, strafed by searchlights, has sprung up in an idyllic Alpine valley; a striped circus tent stretches across the sky above a bombed-out city street. De Balincourt's panels are precisely detailed, but bluntly daubed and harshly colored; his overcrowded public spaces still desolate. Through April 2. (Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700.)

EVA HILD
The Swedish sculptor's curvy, complex forms in pristine white stoneware evoke jumbles of ribbons or the skeletons of deep-sea creatures or advanced mathematical models. They're pretty, baffling, and weirdly absorbing. Through April 16. (Margolis, 523 W. 25th St. 212-242-3013.)

JONAS MEKAS
Flickering screens display forty years of work from the celebrated experimental filmmaker. Poetic, nostalgic footage is juxtaposed with found images and home movies of Elvis, John Lennon, and Yoko Ono. Two separate rooms, one with twelve monitors depicting a day in the life of his family and another with a vitrine full of notebooks and a floor scattered with film cuttings, poignantly commemorate the varied and mundane joys of being alive—and capturing it on film—in the six decades since the Lithuanian-born Mekas was released from a Nazi work camp. Through April 31. (Stendhal, 545 W. 20th St. 212-366-1549.)

TABAIMO
A young Japanese artist combines contemporary animation with the style of Edo woodcuts to create mesmerizing video installations. The centerpiece is a three-wall theatre of images that conjures a traditional Japanese bathhouse upended when young women invade the all-male sanctuary. Corrupt policemen and a scary flock of crows make cameos. Tabaimo's political references will probably elude most non-Japanese, but her universal metaphors and updated Surrealist anime are beautifully realized, balancing stillness with movement—and nostalgia with activism—as carefully as a Noh dancer. Through April 2. (James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)


DIANE ARBUS REVELATIONS

The extraordinary career of Diane Arbus (1923–1971) is celebrated in a major exhibition — the first of its kind in more than 30 years — highlighting her riveting photographs of 20th-century American life.

On view through May 30, 2005
No extra charge for any exhibition.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Short List

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.
Through March 26.

ERIC FISCHL
Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.
Through April 23.

AMY GLOBUS
D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St.
212-352-9460. Through March 26.

"Osvaldo at Home, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1998," from Adriana Groisman's show "Tango, Never Before Midnight," at Leica.

DAMIEN HIRST
Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.
Through April 23.

SARAH MORRIS
Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467.
Through March 26.

"LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS: 40 YEARS OF RULE-BASED ART"
Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St.
212-421-3292. Through March 26.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

NORMA JEANE
In the exhibition "Body Proxy," a modish ottoman upholstered in a slinky pink-beige fabric is allegedly saturated with both male and female pheromones; sit at your own risk. Approaching the motorcycle parked in the gallery triggers another perhaps unwanted interaction, as motion sensors detect your presence and the machine roars menacingly to life. These objects are dedicated to the theorists of desire Federico Fellini and Georges Bataille, respectively, while a large spool wound, we are told, with a knotted-together length of an artist's hair was inspired by Nietzsche. Through March 26. (Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway, at Broome St. 212-925-2035.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY
This tightly edited historical show of small paintings dating from 1955 to 1963 captures the young artist at work in New York, staking out the territory that would become definitively his: figure/ground relationships abstracted to precise (and sometimes amusing) geometries, all rendered in bold, flat colors that exercise the eye. Black and white, green and red, blue and yellow grapple in a cool, mathematical realm where the merest hint of a tilt to a triangle, the subtlest skew at the edge of a rectangle, is enough to set the world on its ear. Through April 23. (Peter Freeman, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-5154.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LARRY CLARK
This retrospective covers a lot of ground, much of it more than once. Beginning with his first book, "Tulsa," published in 1971—in which he chronicled intimately, in black-and-white, the lives of his hometown friends—Clark has focussed on kids: adolescents shooting up, fondling guns, and looking ready for a car wreck. In "Teenage Lust," from 1983, Clark spliced his autobiography (using family photos, text, newspaper clippings, and court records) with images of teen-agers hot to trot. An updated version of the material appeared in the 1995 movie "Kids," represented here by big color stills of skateboarders in Washington Square Park. A group of collages show Clark making the transition from still photography to movies, packing motion into a frame. And then there's the photocopy of an itemized list of drugs Clark had taken by the time he entered rehab. It begins with alcohol, of which he consumed "as much as I could every day for 10 years," and racks up twenty-seven other substances, including an experiment with spray paint in 1968. Through June 5. (International Center of Photography, 1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 212-857-0000.)

LORI GRINKER
A small, moving show of work completed over the last decade by an unfairly overlooked photographer who has documented people affected by the physical and psychological ravages of war, from Canadian and French veterans of the First World War to marines injured in Iraq. Through March 26. (Alexander, 24 W. 57th St. 212-315-2211.)

ADRIANA GROISMAN
Women with bare shoulders and sleek hair and men with closed eyes and impassioned faces populate these black-and-white prints of tango clubs in Buenos Aires. Groisman, who has been exploring the subculture for more than fifteen years, builds a steamy atmosphere with isolated details (a hand, a glass, a cigarette) and longer views that lock them into context. She takes you up the well-worn stairs in high-heeled shoes, into the rest rooms for makeup and wardrobe adjustments, and onto the dance floor, where there might be a lone couple in a clinch or a swirl of couples, seen from behind the blades of an electric fan. Through April 2. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 212-777-3051.)

LISA KERESZI
These color photographs of a recent New York City mostly depict a place that is just out of reach. A chalkboard from an abandoned classroom on Governors Island still has the teacher's name neatly printed across the slate. Other images conjure up the same fractured, even seedy past, from the Show World sign to Coney Island's Wonder Wheel glowing, in double, against a night sky. Also on view is the ethereal début solo show by the talented Jodie Vicenta Jacobson. Through March 26. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

IMRE KINSZKI
This is a fascinating show of mostly tiny vintage photographs by Kinszki, a native of Budapest who was born in 1901 and killed at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1945. Kinszki had a pitch-perfect modernist sensibility, and his work—in which much is made of shadows on sidewalks and crazy angles—is a very welcome addition to the canon. Through March 26. (Klotz/Sirmon, 511 W. 25th St. 212-741-4764.)

STEPHEN SHORE
In the nineteen-seventies, along with William Eggleston, Shore elevated color film to the realm of art-

istry. The youngest photographer to have his work collected by MOMA—he was only fourteen then, in 1961—Shore spent the years between 1973 and 1978 taking photographs throughout the U.S. and Canada, calling the resulting series "Uncommon Places." Shot with an eight-by-ten view camera, which requires a long exposure, the rural and urban landscapes, interiors, and portraits at first appear to be banal shots of ugly places. But the care Shore took in composing the shots, his camera's capacity to record minute detail, and the lost color palette of the seventies make for an invaluable historic record as well as a true artist's most influential work—just ask Andreas Gursky. Through April 16. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.)

Short List

MARC COHEN
Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930.
Through April 2.

CHARLES H. TRAUB
Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.
Through April 2.

"(PEOPLE) IN SERIES, IN SEQUENCE"
Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.
Through April 2.

"PORTRAITS OF AN AGE"
Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Ave. 212-628-6200.
Through June 6.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

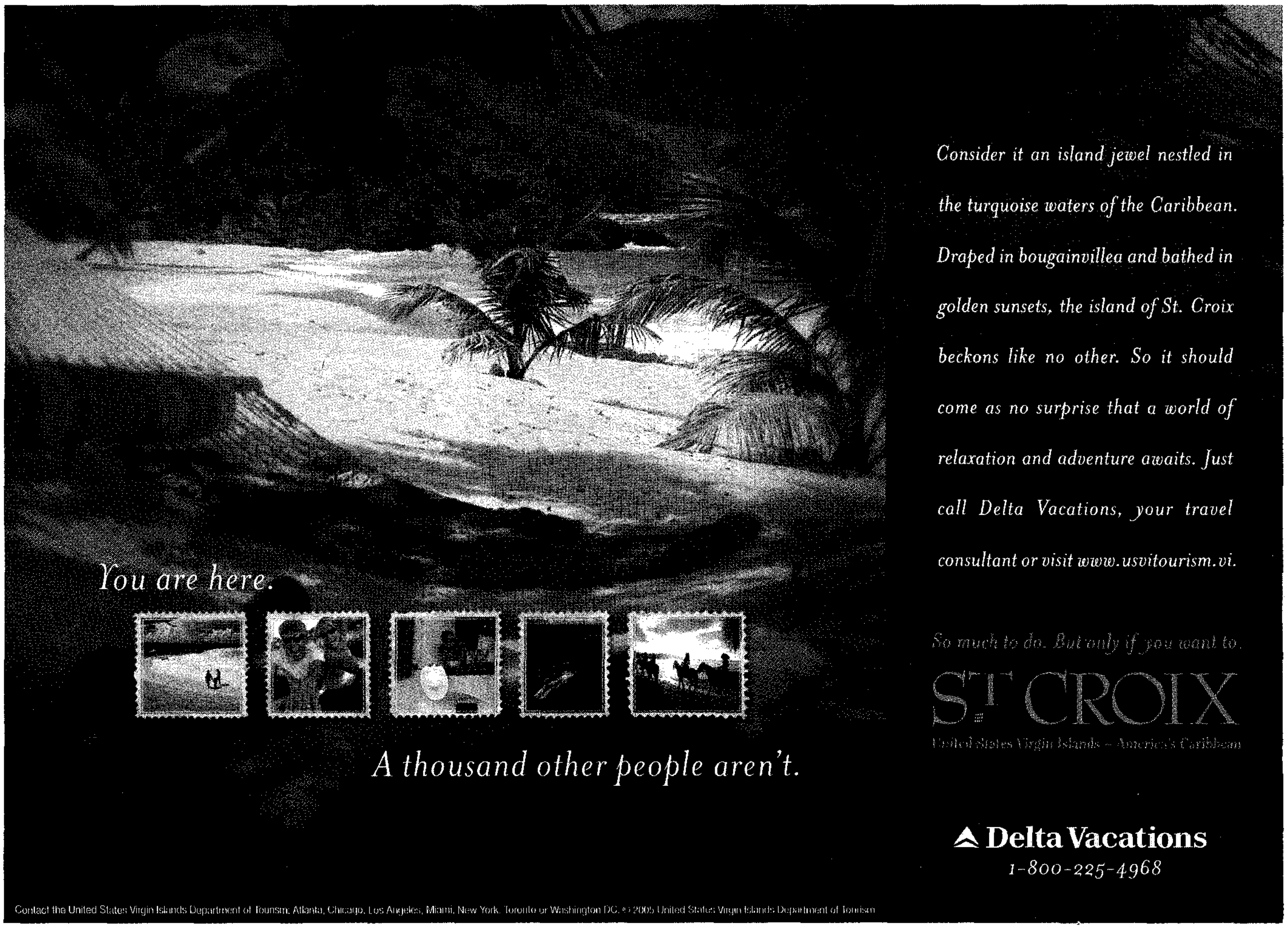
SOTHEBY'S
March 23 at 10:15 A.M.: Manhattan, the Hudson River, and the rugged coast of New England are favorite subjects in this sale of American art. Arthur C. Goodwin's "Hudson River at Kingston" captures the river valley's vivid contrasts and exuberance of color, while Paul Cornoyer's "Rainy Day, Columbus Circle," offers a nostalgic view of a time when this frenzied traffic circle had a civilized Parisian ambience. Other highlights include a watercolor by Maxfield Parrish of a bespectacled and befuddled American tourist in Florence, Baedeker in hand, and a good-natured portrait of two men in a rowboat—one of whom is inexplicably holding a teacup—by Norman Rockwell. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
March 29 at 10 A.M.: This sale of important swords from the Museum of Japanese Sword Fittings features an exquisite *ko-tachi* by the Bungo Province craftsman Yukihira, forged some eight hundred years ago; its slender, curved blade, which has a gentle white sheen and carvings evoking a Buddhist deity called the Unmoving Bright King, underscores the primordial connection between religion and war. ♦ March 29 at 11 A.M., 2, and 5:30: Two notable works of porcelain are among the highlights of this wide-ranging sale of Japanese and Korean art—a square, eggshell-blue bottle from the early nineteenth century, estimated to bring nearly a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and an elegant circular flask from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, expected to fetch nearly as much. No sale of Japanese art would be complete without a view of foam-edged waves cresting near Mount Fuji; here, Hokusai's famous nineteenth-century woodblock print "In the Well of the Great Wave off Kanagawa," one of a series of thirty-six views of the mountain, does the job. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

ANTIQUORUM
March 23 at 11 A.M. and 2: The firm's latest horological sale includes some especially exotic wristwatches, including two made by Vacheron & Constantin that use retrograde hands to tell time over gracefully inlaid maps (of "The Americas" and "Orient and Occident," respectively), as well as a limited-edition titanium watch by Audemars Piguet, designed in coöperation with Arnold Schwarzenegger for the film "Terminator 3." (Central Park Room, Essex House, 160 Central Park S. 212-750-1103.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
March 23 at 7:30: The highlight of this revival of Nathaniel Merrill's sumptuous production of **"Der Rosenkavalier"** is the Met début of the soprano Angela Denoke; she uses her occasionally wayward upper-range pitch to her advantage, creating a memorable Marschallin whose aristocratic grace is leavened with a painfully transparent vulnerability. Also with Kristine Jepson, Lyubov Petrova, John Fanning (Faninal), Peter Rose, and Matthew Polenzani (the Italian Singer); Donald Runnicles conducts, giving the music a nearly ideal blend of lyrical phrasing and forward drive. ♦ March 26 at 8: With Susan Graham—a strapping Octavian—and the redoubtable Håkan Hagegård replacing Jepson and Fanning. ♦ March 24 at 7: Verdi's **"Don Carlo,"** with Sondra Radvanovsky (as Elizabeth), Violeta Urmana, Richard Margison (in the title role), Ferruccio Furlanetto, and Paata Burchuladze; Fabio Luisi. ♦ March 29 at 7: With Elena Essevna replacing Radvanovsky. ♦ March 25 at 8: Salvatore Licitra, whose first brush with fame came in May of 2002 (he took over the role of Cavaradossi in what was supposed to be Luciano Pavarotti's final Met performance), returns to the cast of **"Tosca"** as a legitimate star. He'll have some impressive company in the form of Maria Guleghina (who sings the title role) and Mark Delevan (as Scarpia); James Conlon. ♦ March 26 at 1:30: A last chance to catch the Franco Zeffirelli production of the iconic double bill of Mascagni's **"Cavalleria Rusticana"** and Leoncavallo's **"Pagliacci,"** performed by an impressive cast. "Cav" features Violeta Urmana, Eduardo Villa, and Frederick Burchinal; "Pag" includes John Mac Master, Patricia Racette, and Juan Pons; Dennis Russell Davies conducts these often violent scores with meticulous care. ♦ March 28 at 8: Gerald Finley and Samuel Ramey



Consider it an island jewel nestled in the turquoise waters of the Caribbean. Draped in bougainvillea and bathed in golden sunsets, the island of St. Croix beckons like no other. So it should come as no surprise that a world of relaxation and adventure awaits. Just call Delta Vacations, your travel consultant or visit www.usvitourism.vi.

So much to do. But only if you want to.
ST CROIX
United States Virgin Islands ~ America's Caribbean

Delta Vacations
1-800-225-4968

Contact the United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism: Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Toronto or Washington DC. © 2005 United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism

lead the cast in a revival of **"Don Giovanni,"** as the Don and his long-suffering manservant, Leporello. Tamar Iveri and Adina Nitescu, as Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, and Jonathan Lemalu, as Masetto, all make their Met débuts; also with the excellent Isabel Bayrakdarian, Richard Croft, and Burchuladze; Philippe Jordan. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
March 23 and March 29 at 7:30 and March 26 at 1:30: Chas Rader-Shieber's production of Handel's **"Orlando"** (loosely based on Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso") revels in the kind of goofy stage business that plagues too many productions of the composer's operas—until the end, when the triumph of war over love is brought home with devastating force. The promising cast includes the sopranos Jennifer Aylmer and Amy Burton and the countertenor Bejun Mehta (who excelled in the Met's recent "Rodelinda"); Antony Walker conducts. ♦ March 25 at 8 and March 27 at 1:30: Lori Phillips, a Turandot of note at the house, takes the title role in a revival of **"Madama Butterfly,"** adding some heft to Mark Lamos's lovely production, a floating world of pastel blue. Also with Jennifer Hines, Gerard Powers, and John Packard; Steven Mosteller. ♦ March 26 at 8: **"Carmen"** returns to the repertory, with Melanie Vaccari, Katharine Goeldner (in the title role), John Bellemer, and Malcolm MacKenzie; Steven White. (New York State Theatre. 212-307-4100.)

The New York Festival of Song presents songs by great opera composers on March 23.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Kent Nagano conducts the orchestra in music by Bach (including selections from "The Art of Fugue") and Messiaen (see This Week). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. March 24 at 7:30, March 25 at 2, and March 26 at 8.)

SALZBURGER KAMMERPHILHARMONIE
Yoon K. Lee conducts his young ensemble (which has performed with such soloists as Grace Bumbry and Paul Badura-Skoda) in music by Mozart, Haydn (the Cello Concerto in D Major, with Kate Dillingham), Piazzolla, and Jennifer Higdon. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. March 25 at 8.)

POMERIUM
The superb Renaissance chamber choir, the creation of Alexander Blachly, performs Passion and Resurrection motets by such composers as Du Fay, Senfl, Monteverdi, and Byrd at the Cloisters, New York's authentic medieval venue. (Fort Tryon Park. 212-650-2290. March 26 at 1 and 3.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC
Ute Lemper, the best Kurt Weill singer around, stars in a staged version of "The Seven Deadly Sins," along with the male vocal ensemble Hudson Shad; the conductor is Carl St. Clair, the music director of the Pacific Symphony, who will also lead the orchestra in Hindemith's "Kammermusik No. 1" and Ravel's "Tombeau de Couperin." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. March 26 at 8.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
When John Harbison was invited to write a work for James Levine's inaugural season as music director, he composed "Darkbloom: Overture for an Imagined Opera"; the title refers to Vivian Darkbloom, a character in an infamous sex novel whose name is an anagram of the book's author, Vladimir Nabokov. Charles Wuorinen's Piano Concerto No. 4 is another New York première; the soloist is Peter Serkin, who will also play Stravinsky's inscrutable "Movements for Piano and Orchestra." Levine ends the program with Brahms's Second Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 28 at 8.)

RECITALS

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG: "A DELICATE DRAMA"
When the great opera composers of the nineteenth century took a few moments away from the stage, they sometimes jotted down salon-type songs, often in gently sentimental or dramatic styles, intended as tributes to patrons or friends. Steven Blier and Michael Barrett will accompany an excellent group of young singers (including the soprano Anna Christy and the baritone Joseph Kaiser) in songs by such composers as Gounod, Wagner, and Rossini. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. March 23 at 8.)

MILLER THEATRE
March 23 at 8: Alexandre Tharaud, a young French pianist making his American recital début, offers a Baroque program of Bach (including the "Italian Concerto") and Rameau (the "Suite en La")—without apology, on a Steinway grand. ♦ March 25 at 8: So Percussion, a smooth and expert young ensemble, plays two minimalist masterworks by Steve Reich: "Drumming" and "Sextet." (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799.)

ALFRED BRENDEL
The philospher king of the modern keyboard performs works by Mozart, Schumann ("Kreisleriana"), Schubert, and Beethoven (the "Pastoral" Sonata). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 24 at 8.)

GAMELAN SON OF LION AND FLUX QUARTET
Renee Weiler Concert Hall may not have the city's best acoustics, but it plays host to a wide swath of contemporary-music concerts. In this one, two leading experimental ensembles—one using Indonesian instruments, the other Western strings—offer such works as Dan Demnitz's "Operation Iraqi Freedom," a piece for "gamelan orchestra and embedded string quartet" that highlights the contrast of Javanese and Western tuning. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. March 24 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

BARGEMUSIC
March 25 at 7:30: The pianist Randall Hodgkinson offers solo nocturnes by Fauré, Chopin, Scriabin, and Michael Hersch before accompanying Sharan Leventhal in sonatas for violin and piano by Schubert and Scott Wheeler. ♦ March 26 at 7:30 and March 27 at 4: An all-Ravel program—including "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," the Sonata for Violin and Cello, and the Piano Trio—performed by the violinist Jennifer Choi, the cellist Wendy Law, and the pianist Joel Wizansky. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The pianist Adam Neiman and the violinist Philippe Quint join the ensemble for music by Schubert, Friedrich Witt, and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. March 28 at 2 and 7:30.)

"CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE Y"
An all-star roster of veterans (including the violinist Jaime Laredo and the cellists Sharon Robinson and Janos Starker) offer works by Boccherini, Kodály, and Brahms (the String Sextet in B-Flat Major). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. March 29-30 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"THE LEONARD LOPATE SHOW"
March 29 at 5:45: Lopate has been a fixture on the airwaves of New York public radio for two decades, and he'll celebrate by taping an anniversary show in front of a live audience at the Museum of Modern Art. Guests will include the playwright Neil LaBute; the actors Ben Stiller, Amanda Peet, and Jeffrey Wright, who are appearing in LaBute's new play, "This Is How It Goes"; the Academy Award-winning screenwriter Jim Taylor ("Sideways"); the food critic Ruth Reichl; the essayist Phillip Lopate (Leonard's brother); and others. Audience members are encouraged to ask questions and share memories of past Lopate broadcasts. (Roy and Niuta Titus Theatre, 11 W. 53rd St. 212-669-3333.)

READINGS
March 23 at 6:30: B. D. Wong and other actors read stories by Lara Vapnyar, Robert Coover, and Rattawut Lapcharoensap. The Ying Quartet will also première a composition by John Duffy that was inspired by the life and writings of Mark Twain. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.) ♦ March 24 at 9: Cynthia Zarin, Molly Peacock, Bob Holman, David Yezzi, and other poets read from Dante's Inferno. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 212-316-7540.) ♦ March 29 at 7:30: The poets Jorie Graham, Debora Greger, William Logan, and Mark Strand pay tribute to Donald Justice. Dana Gioia, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, will provide the introduction. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. For more information, call 212-254-9628.)

TALKS
March 24 at 6:30: Robert A. F. Thurman discusses his latest take on Tibetan Buddhism, "The Jewel Tree of Tibet." (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 212-517-2742.) ♦ March 29 at 6: André Aciman hosts a roundtable discussion entitled "The Culture Editor in New York." The panelists include Jonathan Landman, of the *Times*, Adam Begley, of the New York *Observer*, and Dorothy Wickenden, of *The New Yorker*. (The Graduate Center, CUNY, 365 Fifth Ave., at 34th St. For reservations, call 212-817-8215.) ♦ March 29 at 7: Mike Albo and Virginia Heffernan talk about their new book, "The Underminer; or, the Best Friend Who Casually Destroys Your Life." (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. 212-334-3324. No tickets necessary.)

ZOHAR LAZAR

MOVIES OPENING

THE BALLAD OF JACK & ROSE
Rebecca Miller's drama about a liberal back-to-the-lander (Daniel Day-Lewis) who lives on a remote island with his sixteen-year-old daughter (Camilla Belle). With Catherine Keener. Opening March 25. (Sunshine Cinema.)

D.E.B.S.
An adventure comedy in which a group of teen-age girls are recruited by the U.S. government to be secret agents. Written and directed by Angela Robinson. Opening March 25. (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, and Union Square.)

GUESS WHO
Bernie Mac plays a father who's upset that his daughter wants to marry a white boy (Ashton Kutcher), in a comedy directed by Kevin Rodney Sullivan. Opening March 25.

LIPSTICK & DYNAMITE
Pioneers of women's wrestling reflect on their careers in this documentary by Ruth Leitman. Opening March 25. (Angelika Film Center.)

MISS CONGENIALITY 2: ARMED AND FABULOUS
In this comedy sequel, Sandra Bullock returns as an F.B.I. agent who infiltrates the fashion world. Directed by John Pasquin. With Regina King and William Shatner. Opening March 24.

MONDOVINO
A documentary about the modern wine industry, directed by Jonathan Nossiter (see This Week). Opening March 23. (Film Forum.)

NINA'S TRAGEDIES
Savi Gabizon directed this Israeli comic drama, about a fourteen-year-old boy sent to live with his bereaved aunt. In Hebrew. Opening March 25. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

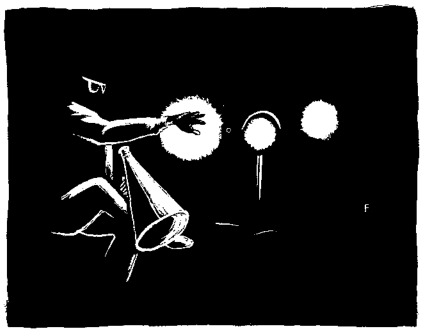
NOWHERE MAN
Tim McCann's dark comedy about a man's search for his manhood, which is cut off by his vengeful fiancée when her past in the porn industry is discovered. Opening March 25. (Quad Cinema.)

OLDBOY
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening March 25. (Angelika Film Center.)

FILM NOTES

THE AVIATOR
The billionaire madman, the taloned hermit of Las Vegas eating nothing but steak and peas—that was the haggard face in the tabloids that millions of us knew in the years before Howard Hughes's death, in 1976. Martin Scorsese's brilliantly entertaining movie goes back to the period when Hughes (Leonardo DiCaprio) was an exhilaratingly handsome and daring young man. The narrative, concocted by the screenwriter John Logan, is not meant to be taken literally. It's a fantasia about a studly capitalist prince who produces and directs movies, designs and flies airplanes, and sleeps with dozens of beautiful actresses and starlets. Toward the end, there are glimpses of the germ-haunted paranoid that Hughes would become, but the movie is consistently lighthearted and engaging, a sort of pop "Citizen Kane." With Cate Blanchett doing a nervy imitation of Katharine Hepburn, Alec Baldwin as Hughes's rival, and Alan Alda as the corrupt Maine senator Owen Brewster.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/20 & 27/04.) (Battery Park 11, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

BE COOL
It's too slovenly to be cool. This sequel to the heavenly "Get Shorty," one of the best American movies of the mid-nineties, brings back the black-suited ex-loan shark Chili Palmer (John Travolta), who, after becoming a Hollywood producer in the original, decides to take on the Los Angeles music business. The movie feels like a show-business tour. "Get Shorty" was a satirical love letter to a corrupt milieu, but this sequel says that the music business is about money and nothing else, so the love drops out of the comedy, which descends from satire to burlesque. Vince Vaughn, however, is consistently funny as Raji, a manager who wants to be black and keeps thumping his chest and delivering such locutions as "Stop hating, start participating. C'mon, twinkle, twinkle, baby." Directed, lamely, by F. Gary Gray. From an Elmore Leonard novel.—*D.D.* (3/7/05) (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Magic Johnson Theatres, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



BORN INTO BROTHELS
Watching Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's prize-winning documentary, shot in Calcutta's Sonagachi red-light district, where Briski lived, on and off, for years, one is initially held by the sensuousness of the colors and the beauty of the children—the offspring of prostitutes, eight, nine, twelve years old, who are growing up in the district and are surely heading into prostitution themselves. Then the "plot" of the movie kicks in. Briski gives the children cameras and teaches them to take pictures of their surroundings; they gain a sense of themselves, and they master a craft. But will Briski be able to get them out of the brothels (where their parents need them for economic reasons) and into decent schools? One is aware of Briski as a rather aggressive guardian angel from the West, who comes in and tries to save only a few children, but she's hardheaded and effective, and her quest makes sense.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Twin, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

BREATHLESS
The adventurous, almost inconsequential story deals with a Parisian cool cat (Jean-Paul Belmondo) who steals cars for a living, murders a policeman, and recommences a love affair with a pretty but equally unadmirable American girl (Jean Seberg), who betrays him to the police. This, of course, sounds like a routine *policier*, but it is immediately evident that Jean-Luc Godard has something vastly more fascinating in mind, which is nothing less than to make comprehensible, and therefore touching and serious, the lives of two disorderly, disconnected, nihilistic young moderns. Belmondo is a born actor who manages all the lightning changes—from arrogance to humor to insouciant stupidity to childlike innocence—that his huge part demands. Seberg's role requires her to be pretty, wooden, and apparently entranced by her own confusions, and she is all of these and no more. At the end of the most important and astonishing passage in the movie, a slow, incredibly protracted bedroom scene between the two lovers, we have not simply "understood" the murderer and his girl for the self-destructive, attractive, and frightening narcissists that they are; we have, to a large degree, *become* them, because the scene has been allowed to continue so long that it has taken us into its own time and pace, and we can no more believe of the film than we can of life itself that it is moving toward some known, prearranged ending. Released in 1960. In French.—*Roger Angell* (2/11/61) (Florence Gould Hall; March 29.)

BRIDE AND PREJUDICE
Ridiculous, but immensely enjoyable. Jane Austen's most enduringly popular story done as a Bollywood musical comedy, with Martin Henderson as Darcy, a callow American millionaire, and the ravishing Aishwarya Rai as the smartly alert Elizabeth Bennet figure, known here as Lalita, one of four highly nubile daughters living in Amritsar. The ballroom scene is turned into a sprightly Bollywood production number; in the street bazaars, cross-dressers and goofy guys with turbans break into dance. It's a travesty, of course, but also an exuberant, good-hearted movie, and it won't corrupt you or Jane Austen. Directed by Gurinder Chadha.—*D.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Paris, and Union Square.)

DEAR FRANKIE
Shona Auerbach's directorial début is part soap opera, part fairy tale, but thoroughly Scottish, which gives it a welcome wee bit of weight. Lizzie (Emily Mortimer) has been a single parent to Frankie (Jack McElhone), who is deaf, for nearly all of his nine and a half years. For reasons we discover gradually, she's told Frankie that his absent father is a working sailor, and the boy writes him newsy, expressive letters; Lizzie intercepts them and replies with block-printed notes accompanied by stamps from exotic ports of call. When Frankie finds out that the ship he's been writing to is scheduled to dock nearby, Lizzie extends the elaborate ruse, hiring a guy (Gerard Butler) to pretend he's Frankie's dad. Auerbach (doubling as cinematographer here) has a quiet, confidant command of the material, and the three leads are admirable. With lovely, foggy views of the western Scottish coast.—*Ken Marks* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

DOWNFALL
The great Swiss-German actor Bruno Ganz gives a staggering performance as Adolf Hitler in this full-scale realist German production detailing the last ten days of the Third Reich. As the Red Army rampages through Berlin, Hitler and his staff have retreated to the bunker under the Reich Chancellery. They are all here—Himmler, Goebbels, Speer, the entire fascinating, loathsome crew of commanders, mad visionaries, and toadies (all brilliantly acted)—and, leading them still, a man so physically ill and constricted in movement that he looks like a broken-down puppet from a Bavarian travelling circus. The puppet comes to life, of course, in appalling self-pitying rants that are borderline funny. The entire movie teeters on the edge of sick comedy—in particular such scenes as the deaths of the Goebbels children, one by one, at the hands of their mother—and at times one longs for a coldly malicious ironist like Brecht or Fassbinder to come in and take over. Produced and written by Bernd Eichinger; directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel. In German.—*D.D.* (2/14 & 21/05) (Film Forum.)

THE FRENCH CONNECTION
William Friedkin directed this hugely successful slam-bang thriller from 1971, about tracking down a shipment of heroin in New York City, which zaps the audience with noise, speed, and brutality. It's certainly exciting, but that excitement isn't necessarily a pleasure. The ominous music keeps tightening the screws and heating things up; the movie is like an aggravated case of New York. It proceeds through chases, pistol-whippings, slashings, murders, snipings, and more chases for close to two hours. This is what's meant to give you a charge. There are no good guys. Gene Hackman plays the lowlife police detective who cracks the case; porkpie-hatted and lewd and boorish, he's also a sadist. The script, by Ernest Tidyman, was based on the supposedly factual account by Robin Moore in a book about the largest narcotics haul in New York police history up to that time.—*Pauline Kael* (Sunshine Cinema; March 25-26.)

THE GUNFIGHTER
Gregory Peck made his biggest and boldest mark in the genre with Henry King's adult Western from 1950, which replaces the youthful myth of the indomitable gunfighter with a more sober archetype: the violent champion weary of his past. Peck imbues the title character, Jimmy Ringo, with the self-lacerating regret of a man who realizes that he has squandered his adulthood. "How come I run into a squirt like you nearly everyplace I go

these days?" he asks the latest aspiring gunslinger. Drawing on every part of his character's bruised, wasted humanity, Peck fills out the iconoclasm of the script—and makes it sting. William Bowers and André de Toth won Oscar nominations for Best Original Story; Bowers and William Sellers wrote the script.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; March 25-26.)

GUNNER PALACE

In late 2003 and early 2004, the filmmakers Michael Tucker and Petra Epperlein hung out with the men and women of an American field-artillery unit in Baghdad and came back with this fragmentary but suggestive report. The movie has an absurdist framework: the company is billeted in a former palace that had belonged to Saddam's son Uday, a building that looks like a gigantic, crumbling Miami Beach hotel, complete with swimming pool and putting green. At night, in scary raids, the soldiers break into the houses of suspected bombmakers and often find nothing. Mostly very young, they are baffled and frustrated by a situation in which they are received not (as they had been told) as liberators but essentially as occupiers. Their innocence is both touching and exasperating. What right does anyone have to be so uninformed? Bitter rap lyrics, sometimes sung straight into the camera, serve as the descendant of the acid rock that played throughout Vietnam movies.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Empire 25.)

HEAD-ON

Two people meet in the hospital, brought together by suicidal tendencies: such is the cheerful starting point of Fatih Akin's new film. Set first in Hamburg and then in Istanbul, it traces the curious rapport between the sullen Cahit (Birol Ünel) and the flaky, lustrous Sibel (Sibel Güner). In a way, theirs is a love story in reverse: they set off in mistrust, move to indifference, slide into a marriage of convenience, begin to notice and value one another, and finally ascend to a state of ineradicable need. Even then, fortune dams their happiness; Akin's movie may be enlivened by a savage energy, but beneath it flows a quiet and rueful pessimism. He has delved into an obvious place—the predicament of Turkish workers in modern Germany—and come up with a consuming tale, forcing us to wonder why directors in the U.S. aren't turning to their own immigrant communities and finding similar treasures. Featuring fine supporting turns from Catrin Striebeck (butch and unabashed) and Güven Kiraç (benign and tubby). In German and Turkish (listen carefully for the switch between the two).—*Anthony Lane* (3/14/05) (Village East Cinemas.)

HITCH

Smiling at a woman, his eyes crinkling, the actor Will Smith bears an uncanny resemblance to Bill Clinton. In this modern screwball comedy, Smith exerts his considerable charm as a swift, super-knowing "date doctor" who advises men of less than extraordinary appearance how to woo the women of their dreams. Some of his advice is cornball stuff, and some of it narrowly practical and probably true (if she fiddles with her keys at her doorstep, she wants to be kissed). Smith's principal student is a heavyset accountant, played by the TV-comedy actor Kevin James, who is light on his feet in the tradition of such buoyant heavies as Zero Mostel and Jackie Gleason and possibly just as talented as those two. James's scenes with Smith and with Amber Valletta, who plays a bored heiress, are full of surprises. The movie is too long for what it has to say, but much of it is good-hearted fun. Stay for the dance sequence at the very end. Written by Kevin Bisch; directed by Andy Tennant.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Magic Johnson Theatres, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

HOTEL RWANDA

Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle), the Rwandan manager of the four-star Hôtel des Mille Collines, in Kigali, wears a blue suit and tie and is very polite, even deferential, toward everyone. When the Hutu massacres of the Tutsi minority begin, in the spring of 1994, Paul keeps the Mille Collines running. He also, on the sly, establishes it as a haven for both Hutu and Tutsi fugitives, keeping them momentarily safe from the machete-wielding militia, who kill eight hundred thousand people in a few months. Working in Rwanda and South Africa, the writer-director, Terry George, convincingly stages the paralyzing fear in the night, the vilely inciting radio broadcasts, the chaos and arbitrary madness of the slaughter. But the true drama of "Hotel Rwanda" lies in the character of Paul, who is betrayed by the Europeans who formed him but who holds to his belief in civility, right through the worst disasters. The movie is a triumph for Cheadle—he never steps outside the character for emotional grandstanding or easy moralism.—*D.D.* (12/20 & 27/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

MELINDA AND MELINDA

At dinner with friends in a Greenwich Village restaurant, two playwrights, one tragic (Larry Pine), one comic (Wallace Shawn), offer alternate versions of the same story: Melinda (Radha Mitchell), a distraught young woman, shows up, unannounced, at a dinner party held by old friends and intrudes upon their lives. The dramatic framework of Woody Allen's new movie is ambitious, but an odd sort of indifference or blindness seems to have overcome him during production. Mitchell is surrounded by different actors in each version, but it's surprisingly hard to tell the two stories apart. The general atmosphere of both stories and even some of the characters are very similar: both are set in Woodyland, that familiar elegant fantasy version of Manhattan, impeccably furnished, with no brightness, no neon, no pop culture anywhere, and the characters are largely a nattering, trivial, shallowly self-serving bunch. Mitchell is a fine young actress, but Allen pushes her so far into the fidgets that one rather dreads her next appearance. One leaves with such sour thoughts as, The inability to pull oneself together is neither tragic nor comic; it's just a waste of energy. With Will Ferrell, Amanda Peet, Jonny Lee Miller, and Chloë Sevigny.—*D.D.* (3/21/05) (Beekman, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

MILLION DOLLAR BABY

Much of Clint Eastwood's evocative and poetic boxing movie is set in the Hit Pit, a moldy, sweat-stained downtown Los Angeles gym in which crusty veterans train a few serious fighters and many hapless punks. Scrap (Morgan Freeman), an ex-fighter with one functioning eye, works at the gym and exchanges affectionately nasty remarks with the owner, one Frankie Dunn (Eastwood). Against his better judgment, Frankie agrees to take on a tough country woman, Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), who, not entirely to our surprise, rapidly becomes the hottest fighter in the sordid but lucrative world of women's boxing. The story, adapted by Paul Haggis from F. X. Toole's collection, "Rope Burns," is borderline trite, but the movie has the sweet melancholy of a great jazz piece.—*D.D.* (12/20 & 27/04) (Angelika Film Center, Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and 34th Street Theatre.)

MILLIONS

In a surprisingly sunny suburb of Manchester, two motherless little boys—one pious and generous (Alex Etel), the other enterprising and manipulative (Lewis McGibbon)—gain control of a Nike bag filled with cash after thieves throw it off a moving train. Will the secretive boys invest the money, give it to the poor, spend it on video games? And when will the nasty blackguards who stole the money show up, eager to recover the swag? "Millions," written by Frank Cottrell Boyce and directed by Danny Boyle, should have had the enchantment of "Empire of the Sun" or the recent Italian film "I'm Not Scared" or a dozen other child-centered stories and movies, but Boyle can't stop showing off his virtuosity. He changes camera speeds, zips through sequences, sends things flying through the air. We're supposed to be overwhelmed by magic, but what we see is fancy film technique and a lot of overstrained whimsy. To use special effects without coming off as glib, you may have to be a boy at heart yourself.—*D.D.* (3/21/05) (Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

OSAMA

The forty-two-year-old writer-director Siddiq Barmak, an Afghan film nut who never recovered from seeing "Lawrence of Arabia" as a boy, has gifts of vision and temperament equal to those of the finest directors now working. This lovely movie from 2003, which was the first feature to come out of Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, is about a twelve-year-old girl (Marina Golbahari) who dresses as a boy in order to get work and winds up with dozens of prepubescent boys in a madrassa, where she is subjected to nonstop Koranic recitation and bizarre lectures about sex. The movie is deeply shocking and understated, with an iconic use of such repeated imagery as the shots of men slowly keying elaborate locks that pen the women up. The groups of faceless women in their burkas are like fields of lavender swaying in the wind; the boys in their white turbans bobbing over the Koran are both beautiful and foreboding. Made for less than fifty thousand dollars (plus free use of camera and crew), the movie is an outright miracle. In Dari and Pashto.—*D.D.* (Moving Image; March 27.)

THE RING TWO

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Battery Park 11, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Magic Johnson Theatres, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE SEA INSIDE

The director Alejandro Amenábar's follow-up to his big American hit ("The Others") is a Spanish-language film—the true-life story of Ramón Sampedro, a quadriplegic who led a campaign in favor of his right to die. As Sampedro, Javier Bardem gives a small miracle of a performance. Confined to his bed, unable to move, Bardem has an uncanny ability to express mystery and resilience. The movie centers on Sampedro's loving family and the two women who try to change his life (one supports his euthanasia, the other doesn't). The dialogue is, at times, poetic, and there's a moving, somnambulistic feel to the film—it slowly drifts asleep.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

SIDEWAYS

Paul Giamatti is the anti-ideal of the American male, and he's making a brilliant career of it. In this wonderful movie by the team of Alexander Payne (writer-director) and Jim Taylor (co-writer), Giamatti plays Miles, a failed novelist around forty who takes off for a wine-tasting tour with his buddy Jack (Thomas Haden Church), a washed-up TV actor who is about to get married. What starts as a last fling at freedom becomes for the two men—but centrally for Miles—a confrontation with middle age and stasis. On the road, the men meet Maya (Virginia Madsen), a divorced graduate student who works as a waitress, and Stephanie (Sandra Oh), a sexy "pour girl." The music and the camera setups are at times pedestrian, but the rest of "Sideways" is vivid and bitterly funny.—*D.D.* (10/25/04) (Beekman, Chelsea West, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

THE UPSIDE OF ANGER

Terry Wolfmeyer (Joan Allen), an upper-middle-class suburban housewife abandoned by her long-time husband, is one of those bright people who tend to overdefine everything. Lonely and enraged, Terry can't stop biting people's heads off, including her own. Lucky for her, a beery retired baseball star living nearby, Denny (Kevin Costner), doesn't mind her snarls. He slowly insinuates himself into both Terry's bed and her stormy relations with her four beautiful daughters. This domestic romantic comedy, written and directed by Mike Binder (who appears in the movie as Denny's sleazebag friend), has many sharp moments, and Allen (angular, tense, and rapid) and Costner (slow and paunchy, but brighter than he seems at first) make a satisfyingly eccentric couple. The movie takes its time; Binder has a feeling for the way people get through the day by telling little lies. With Erika Christensen, Evan Rachel Wood, Keri Russell, and Alicia Witt as the four fab Wolfmeyer girls.—*D.D.* (Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

DON'T MOVE
Sunshine Cinema.
MILK & HONEY
Quad Cinema.
THE PACIFIER
Battery Park 11, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Magic Johnson Theatres, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.
ROBOTS
Battery Park 11, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Magic Johnson Theatres, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Magic Johnson Theatres, Frederick Douglass Blvd. at 125th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Preservation première. March 23-24 at 7 and 9: "The Flower Thief" (1960, Ron Rice). ♦ March 24 at 8: Thurston Moore presents his favorite moments from his bootleg-video collection. ♦ "Anthology Preservations." March 25 at 7:30 and 9:30: "The Wind Is Driving Him Toward the Open Sea" (1968, David Brooks). ♦ March 26 at 7 and 9: "Another Sky" (1955, Gavin Lambert). ♦ March 27 at 6 and March 29 at 9: Films by the Kuchar brothers (1962-63). ♦ March 27 at 8:30 and March 29 at 7: More films by the Kuchar brothers (1958-63). ♦ "Essential Cinema." March 26 at 5: "Zvenigora" (1928, Alexandr Dovzhenko; silent). ♦ March 27 at 4: "Arsenal" (1928-29, Dovzhenko; silent).

Park Chanwook directed the Korean thriller "Oldboy," opening March 25.

MAXIMILIAN BODE

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Samuel Fuller's war movies. March 23 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Merrill's Marauders" (1962). ♦ March 24 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Fixed Bayonets" (1951). ♦ March 25 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Steel Helmet" (1950). ♦ March 26-27 at 2, 5:30, and 9: "The Big Red One" (1980). ♦ "Fright Nights." March 28 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "White Reindeer" (1952, Erik Blomberg; in Finnish). ♦ March 29 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Demons" (1985, Lamberto Bava; in Italian).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through March 31: "Essential Westerns." March 23-24 at 1:20, 5:20, and 9:20: "Bad Day at Black Rock" (1955, John Sturges). ♦ March 23-24 at 3 and 7: "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" (1957, Sturges). ♦ March 25-26 at 1, 5:30, and 10: "The Gunfighter" (†). ♦ March 25-26 at 2:40 and 7:10: "Duel in the Sun" (1946, King Vidor). ♦ March 27-28 at 1, 4:25, and 7:50: "My Darling Clementine" (1946, John Ford). ♦ March 27-28 at 2:55, 6:20, and 9:45: "The Ox-Bow Incident" (1943, William Wellman). ♦ March 29 at 1:20, 5:25, and 9:30: "The Furies" (1950, Anthony Mann). ♦ March 29 at 3:25 and 7:30: "Pursued" (1947, Raoul Walsh).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through April 26: "Paris Series." March 29 at 12:30 and 7: "Zazie in the Subway" (1960, Louis Malle; in French) and "Ménilmontant" (1925, Dmitri Kirsanoff; silent). ♦ March 29 at 4: "Breathless" (†).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Through March 23: "Canadian Front 2005." March 23 at 6: "Hotel Saudade" (2004, Cameron Bailey) and "The Phantom of the Operator" (2004, Caroline Martel; in French and English). ♦ March 23 at 8: "Roger Toupin, Neighborhood Grocer" (2004, Benoît Pilon; in French). ♦ "Miramax: 25 Years." March 23 at 7: "Scream" (1996, Wes Craven). ♦ Special screening. March 25 at 7: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1964, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian). ♦ "112 Years of Cinema." March 26 at 1: "The Big Trail" (1930, Raoul Walsh).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through March 27: "Women's Places: New Films from the Middle East." March 26 at 2: "To Take a Wife" (2004, Shlomi and Ronit Elkabetz; in Hebrew). ♦ March 26 at 4:30: "Rachida" (2002, Yamina Bachir-Chouikh; in Arabic). ♦ March 27 at 2: "Osama" (†). ♦ March 27 at 4: "Rana's Wedding" (2002, Hany Abu-Assad; in Arabic). ♦ Repertory nights. March 25 at 7:30 and March 26-27 at 6:30: "I Vitteloni" (1953, Federico Fellini; in Italian).

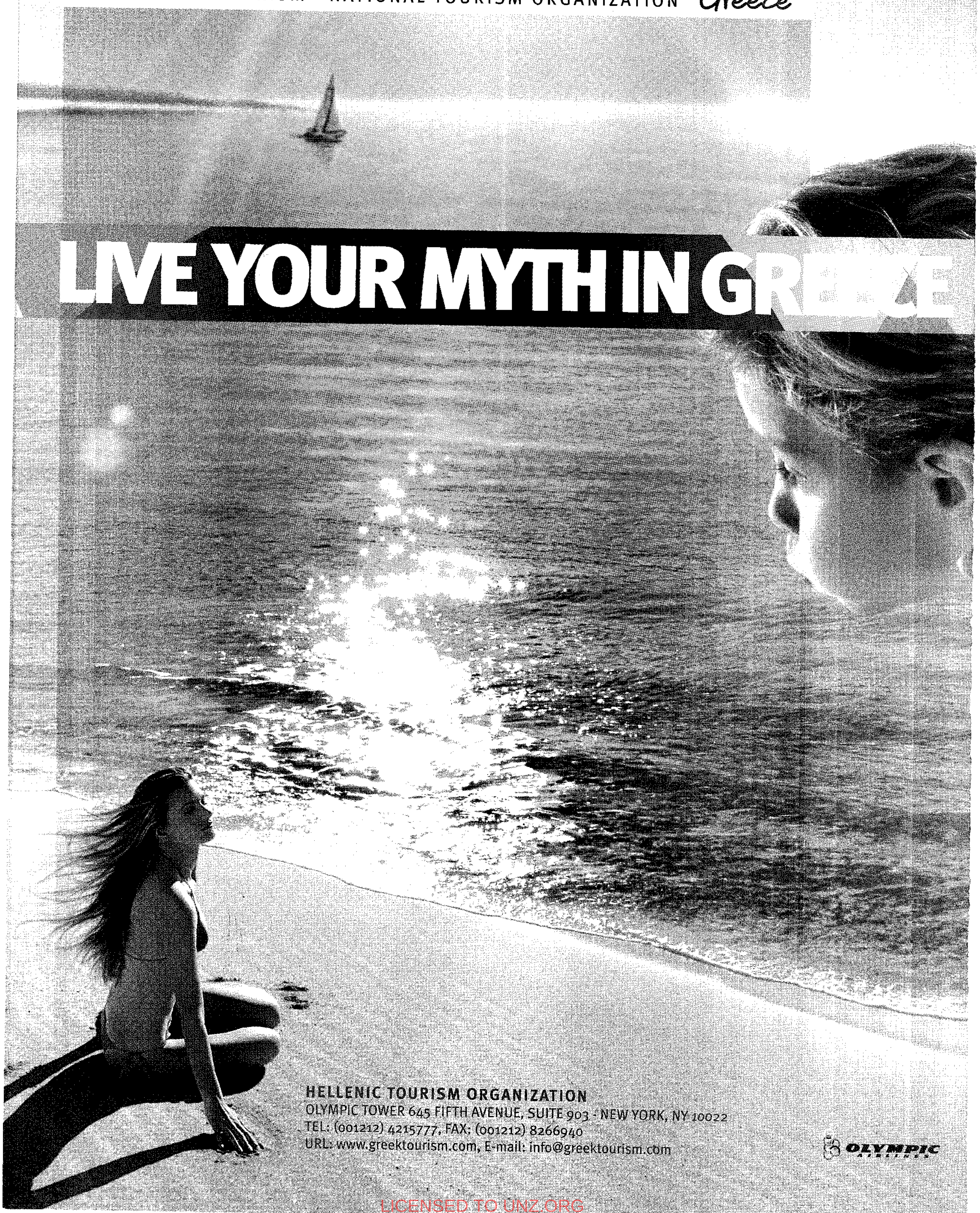
NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS
Presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art. (212-875-5050)—The festival, which runs through April 3, shows films at three different venues. See www.filmlinc.com for locations. March 23 at 8 and March 24 at 6: "The Hero" (2004, Zézé Gamboa; in Portuguese). ♦ March 24 at 6 and March 26 at 9: "Sequins" (2004, Eléonore Faucher; in French). ♦ March 24 at 6 and 8:45 and March 26 at 3:30: "Mila from Mars" (2004, Sophia Zornitsa; in Bulgarian). ♦ March 24 at 8:30 and March 25 at 6: "Somersault" (2004, Cate Shortland). ♦ March 24 at 8:45 and March 26 at 3:45: "Our Brand Is Crisis" (2005, Rachel Boynton). ♦ March 25 at 6 and March 26 at 6:15: "Le Grand Voyage" (2004, Ismaël Ferroukhi; in French). ♦ March 25 at 6 and 8:45 and March 27 at 6:30: "Two Great Sheep" (2004, Liu Hao; in Mandarin). ♦ March 25 at 9 and March 27 at 1: "Junebug" (2005, Phil Morrison). ♦ March 25 at 8:45, March 26 at 6:15, and March 26 at 9: "Duck Season" (2004, Fernando Eimbcke; in Spanish). ♦ March 26 at 3:30 and March 27 at 9: "Live-In Maid" (2004, Jorge Gaggero; in Spanish). ♦ March 26 at 6 and March 27 at noon: "Murderball" (2005, Henry Alex Rubin and Dana Adam Shapiro). ♦ March 26 at 9 and March 27 at 3:30: "They Came Back" (2004, Robin Campillo; in French). ♦ March 27 at 3:45 and March 28 at 6: "Darwin's Nightmare" (2004, Hubert Sauper; in English, Russian, and Swahili). ♦ March 27 at 6:15 and 9 and March 28 at 8:30: "Certi Bambini" (2004, Andrea and Antonio Frazzi; in Italian). ♦ March 28 at 6 and March 29 at 6 and 8:30: "The Welts" (2004, Magdalena Piekorz; in Polish). ♦ March 28 at 9: "Young Rebels" (2005, Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden). ♦ March 29 at 6: "Clorox, Ammonia, and Coffee" (2004, Mona J. Hoel; in Norwegian). ♦ March 29 at 9: "Private" (2004, Saverio Costanzo; in Arabic, English, and Hebrew).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. March 25-26: "The French Connection" (†).

Greece: a land of mythical dimensions. Where the spirit of hospitality welcomes you as a modern god. And the siren song draws you into its deep blue waters. Where a gentle breeze through ancient ruins seems to whisper your name. And a dance until dawn can take on Dionysian proportions. In Greece, the myths are still very much alive. And in amongst them sits your own... patiently waiting for you to live it. **Live your myth in Greece.** Ask your travel agent.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM - NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

wonderful Greece


www.gnto.gr
LIVE YOUR MYTH IN GREECE

HELLENIC TOURISM ORGANIZATION
OLYMPIC TOWER 645 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 903 - NEW YORK, NY 10022
TEL: (001212) 4215777, FAX: (001212) 8266940
URL: www.greektourism.com, E-mail: info@greektourism.com

OLYMPIC AIRLINES

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

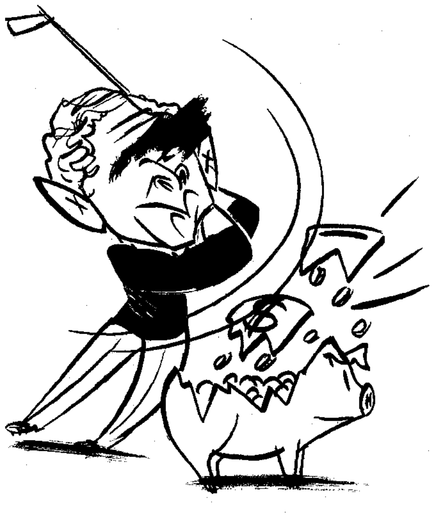
COMMENT
UNTRUSTWORTHY

As an institution, the trust fund has been good to the Bush clan. Thanks to this ingenious financial tool, through which part of a family fortune can be protected for its intended beneficiaries, George W., among other Bushes, has been spared some of the material difficulties that afflict so many of their fellow-citizens. It is the trust fund that, in part, has allowed members of the family to follow their dreams.

Another sort of trust fund, the one associated with Social Security, has likewise been good to America's ruling dynasty. True, the direct disbursements are relatively trifling: although the checks go out to Poppy and Bar, as they do to thirty million other retirees, the amounts are probably insufficient to pay lawnmowing and pool expenses at Kennebunkport. But the political benefits, especially to their firstborn son, have been formidable. The Social Security system consists of, on the one hand, a disbursement mechanism that provides modest but dependable incomes to the elderly and the disabled and their survivors and dependents, and, on the other hand, a funding mechanism, a 12.4-per-cent flat tax on wages up to ninety thousand dollars a year. The difference between the two goes into (or comes out of) the Social Security trust fund, which has grown dramatically over the past twenty years. In tandem with the Clinton Administration's fiscally responsible budgeting, the trust fund's growth pulled the entire federal budget out of deficit from 1998 to 2001. Those trust-fund-driven budget surpluses, in turn, enabled George W. Bush, first as a candidate and then as President, to sell (falsely, it turned out) his program of tax cuts for the comfortable as a freebie. And the trust-fund surplus kept this year's budget deficit down to a scary $412.1 billion, rather than the scarier $563.2 billion it would be without it. You would think, therefore, that the President would speak respectfully of the Social Security trust fund. But no.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

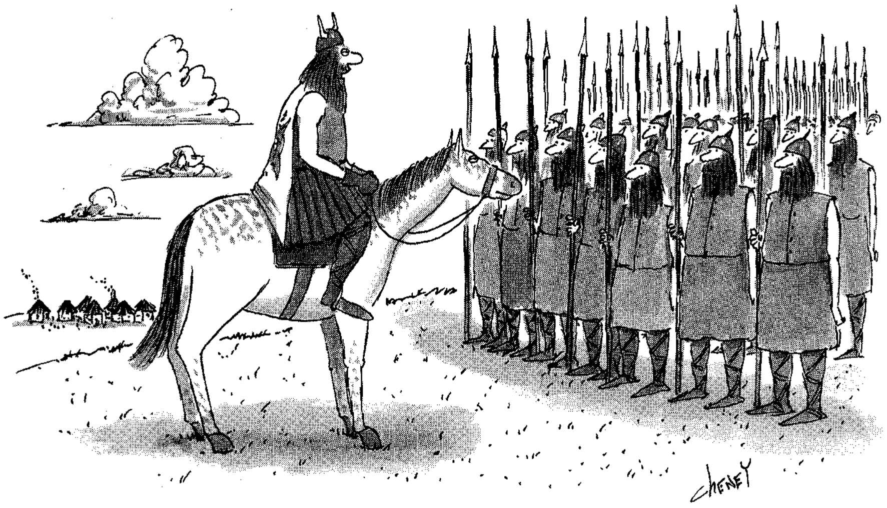
Bush had a press conference last Wednesday morning, and he was in a bouncy mood. The news from the Middle East has been better of late, and no doubt that was part of it. But he also seemed to be emotionally distancing himself from the fate of his proposal to privatize Social Security, which has been looking increasingly dubious. He described privatization as "an interesting idea, and one that people ought to discuss." And he admitted, more clearly and more cheerfully than he had before, that "personal accounts do not solve the issue," by which he meant the system's long-term solvency. He's right about that. Personal accounts would not "solve" that "issue," just as pouring the contents of one's canteen onto the sand would not solve the issue of thirst in the desert.



Then, feeling expansive, the President got around to the trust fund:

> You know, one thing about Social Security—I'm sorry to blow on here, but now that you asked—a lot of people in America think *there is a trust:* your money goes in, the government holds it, and then the government gives your money back when you retire. That's just not the way it works. . . . And right now, we're paying for a lot of programs other than Social Security with the payroll tax coming in, thereby leaving a pile of IOUs.

Bush has made this point before. "Some in our country think that Social Security is a trust fund," he said a few weeks ago. "In other words, there's a pile of money being accumulated. That's just simply not true. . . . There is no trust." The point is a regular part of the stump speech he has been delivering around the country in his campaign to "reform" (that is, phase out) Social Security in favor of—well, the details will be forthcoming eventually, or maybe they



"And, lastly, you are reminded to loot, pillage, and burn responsibly."

• •

won't, but the general idea seems to be some sort of individual trust-fund portfolio of government-approved investments, only instead of Mom and Dad putting in the money you put it in yourself, and the more you put in (i.e., the better off you were to begin with) the more you get out, unless your investments go bad, in which case you end up old and poor, unless you're rich, in which case you end up just old. And rich.

The trust-fund-as-myth contention is a staple of Bush's echo chamber of conservative op-edders and think-tankers. Whether there is any truth to it is an interesting, as he might say, question. (It's worth noting, by the way, that, if the trust fund is a myth, then its prospective shortfall is a myth, too.) The trust fund, which has close to two trillion dollars in it at the moment, is frequently derided as an accounting fiction. In fact, it consists of a growing pile of U.S. Treasury bonds of a special type, embossed and beribboned and neatly stacked in a vault in West Virginia. Unlike standard Treasury bonds, these do not fluctuate in value. By the same token, they cannot be traded on the open market, which is why many of Bush's ideological allies dismiss them as mere pieces of paper, without inherent worth.

It is theoretically true that the Treasury, with Congress's permission, could refuse to redeem these bonds when the time came. The consequences would be severe, especially at the next election: seniors, already a fifth of the voting public, will be something like a quarter of it in 2018, when, according to the Social Security Administration's (highly conservative) estimates, the trust fund has to start cashing in. But it could happen, theoretically. Of course, the Treasury could also refuse to honor the bonds held by foreigners. These, too, are pieces of paper. The main difference is that the consequences of default would be harsher. For that matter, Federal Reserve notes—the ones, fives, and twenties in our wallets—are pieces of paper, too. Their only value is as symbols of a promise from the United States government. If the promise is no good, neither is the money. The entire economy runs on promises—that is, trust—which is why paranoid survivalists convert their assets to guns and cans of tuna fish.

At some point in the future, American society may have to decide to devote somewhat more of its collective resources to the care of the elderly, or else it will have to require the elderly to get along with somewhat less. But, as Bush himself has now admitted, this is not a problem that privatization can solve. What is not a myth is the budget deficit, which is a problem, verging on a crisis, right now—a problem that Social Security, unlike the Bush tax cuts, has so far alleviated, not worsened.

The demand to phase out Social Security is supposedly motivated by high-minded principles, such as "freedom" (the freedom to choose among a bewildering array of mutual funds). But something more ignoble may be at work, too. Social Security—like the public-school system, the progressive income tax, the neighborhood public library, the subways and buses, food stamps, and a host of other socialistic schemes—runs counter to the narrow economic interests of the rich, because they generally have to put more money into it than they get out. It does benefit them as citizens, however, assuming that they prefer to live in a society of civic peace, civic order, and civic decency—a society of trust. It is not helpful to them, or to anyone else in the country or on the planet, when the President announces, "There is no trust."

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

IN YOUR FUTURE
POPSTROLOGICALLY SPEAKING

What a week. Well, maybe not, but, still, the news of the world summoned up the usual apprehension and puzzlement. Paul Wolfowitz, Robert Iger, the brothers Giambi, Lil' Kim: how is a guy to make sense of it all?

A fresh approach is always welcome. A few months ago, a stay-at-home dad named Ian Van Tuyl introduced one, in a book called "Popstrology." Popstrology is a system for achieving self-awareness through the study of the pop-music charts—specifically, by determining which pop song was No. 1 on the day of your birth. If, for example, you happen to have been hatched during that brief, blissful period in October, 1976, when the airwaves were ruled by "Disco Duck," you may have inherited from its creators, the opportunistic d.j. Rick Dees and His Cast of Idiots, an ability "to parlay simple needs and even modest gifts into the precise degree of greatness to which you aspire." (As it happens, 1976 was the Year of Rod Stewart.) Popstrology is no parlor game; its methodology is elaborate and broad—the book is almost four hundred pages long. Van Tuyl identifies forty-five constellations (Lite & White, Mustache Rock, Shaking Booty), and, for each No. 1 artist (or "birthstar"), he provides a chart, which maps the birthstar's signature qualities on a matrix of sexiness, soulfulness, and durability, among other variables. (Van Tuyl has no truck with coolness; popstrologically, there are no bad pop songs.) In the introduction, he writes, "Popstrology is a powerful and flexible science, and where its adherents take it in the years ahead is anyone's guess."

As of last week, however, popstrology's only adherent seemed to be Van Tuyl himself, so it was up to him to take it, with only a little prodding, into the uncharted realm of current events. Over a pint of Guinness in a bar on upper Broadway, Van Tuyl, who is thirty-eight years old and married to a sociology professor, considered a number of personages whose names had been in the papers. To do so, he had to expand the boundaries of the popstrological era, which, to orthodox practitioners, covers only the years from 1956 to 1989—Elvis Presley to Richard Marx. Apparently, many people over the age of forty-nine still hold positions of influence in the world.

First up, Michael Eisner and Robert Iger; Iger had just been named Eisner's successor as the C.E.O. of Disney. "Michael Eisner is a Glenn Miller," Van Tuyl said. "His birth song is 'Moonlight Cocktail.' Glenn Miller's a bandleader, he's an executive, but, more to the point, he died in an airplane over the English Channel. He didn't leave on his own terms is the point. I mean, the guy was the Elvis of 1941 to 1943. So there are unbelievably strong career implications for Michael Eisner. And Eisner's career accomplishments have been huge, but the fact is the children of Glenn Miller may not choose the way they go out."

"Iger," he continued. "Iger is a child of Patti Page. His birth song is 'Tennessee Waltz,' but she was also 'How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?' She was a bright, shining, thriving target for rock and roll to knock down. On the other hand, this woman sold records well into the sixties. I would be surprised to see any child of Patti Page showing any kind of revolutionary innovation. Probably stewardship is something Iger could aspire to."

Although popstrology was conceived and executed as satire, it has a sneaky way of starting to seem reasonable. It's not hard to argue that whatever song it was that was playing on the radio around the time of your birth not only would have settled in the deep tissues of your lizard brain but also would have signalled a very particular, democratically affirmed spirit of the age, to which any infant would certainly be susceptible. Van Tuyl, anyway, is a straight-faced evangelist. He is a Double Monkee from Oakland—he was born while the Monkees' song "I'm a Believer" was No. 1, in 1967, which happened to be the Year of the Monkees. This helps Van Tuyl explain to himself why he has had issues with legitimacy over the years.

Next up, the rapper 50 Cent and his collaborator The Game, who have been feuding. "50 Cent is a child of the song 'Afternoon Delight,' " Van Tuyl said. "He's a Starland Vocal Band, from the constellation Lite & White. It's not surprising or rare to see children born under Lite & White rushing as hard as they can for the edge. There's no question that popstrological white bread is a difficult thing for people to come to terms with."

He went on, "The Game is the child of a power couple. The constellation Power Couple refers to short-lived entities that are duos of independently viable stars. The first power couple was Nancy and Frank Sinatra." In The Game's case, it was Donna Summer and Barbra Streisand. Streisand, it turns out, is a "popstrological succubus": no one who recorded with her ever had a No. 1 hit again. "Frankly," Van Tuyl said, "if I knew this about The Game, I'd be reluctant to pair up with him."

Under duress, popstrology can even offer insights into the Bush Administration. Dick Cheney is an Artie Shaw. ("Man of few words, curmudgeonly intellectual: he wrote an autobiography that was apparently very strange. He hardly wrote anything about his eight marriages or all his bands.") Condoleezza Rice is an Eddie Fisher. ("Lothario. This is a classic instance of popstrological opposition: her staunch loyalty has to be deriving from some kind of opposition to that popstrological course.") John Bolton is a Dinah Shore. ("Something I'd like to see is the Senate looking deeper into people's popstrological legacies.")

"Paul Wolfowitz is interesting," Van Tuyl said. "He's a Mills Brother. 'Paper Doll.' " He began to recite from the song: " 'I'd rather have a paper doll to call my own than have a fickle-minded real live girl.' " A meaningful look. "Reality can be complicated. Real life can be sticky. On the other hand, two-dimensional representations of reality never change. They never betray you. Commitment to beliefs, whatever those beliefs may be, is probably common among Mills Brothers."

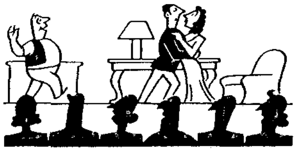
Another pint. "Bush is an Ink Spot. His birth song is 'The Gypsy.' " Van Tuyl quoted from it: " 'Everything will come right, if you only believe the Gypsy.' "

"Who's the Gypsy?"

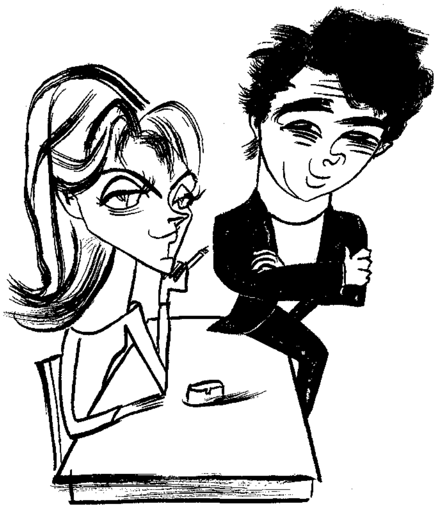
"Exactly!"

—*Nick Paumgarten*

THE BOARDS
STREETCAR UPDATE



The Roundabout Theatre's production of Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire"—the play's sixth on Broadway since the original, with Marlon Brando, opened, fifty-eight years ago—begins previews next week at Studio 54. After rehearsal the other evening, the director, Edward Hall, and his Blanche, Natasha Richardson, hung around, mulling over plans. They already appeared to be palpably overtaken by the drama. Richardson, who usually is, in her own persona, elegantly calm, looked frail, her shoulders slumping, and huskiness creeping into her voice. Her hair, in the service of her character, was bleached a strawlike blond. Hall, who is thirty-eight, with an unruly thatch atop his head, exuded confidence and determination.



Natasha Richardson and Edward Hall

"Everything that was said about the play when it opened in 1947 is absolutely useless for directing," he said. "The reviews were always commenting on what the play *means*, instead of the way Williams makes the conversations happen."

"I had no interest in doing museum theatre," Richardson said.

"This play is universal, like Shakespeare," said Hall, who has been directing Shakespeare for fifteen years, both for the Royal Shakespeare Company and for his own company, Propeller. "It is so ferociously modern."

He pointed to the wall, on which was tacked a sheet of paper bearing this quote:

> There are no "good" or "bad" people. Some are a little better or a little worse but all are activated more by misunderstanding than malice. A blindness to what is going on in each other's hearts. Stanley sees Blanche not as a desperate, driven creature backed into a last corner to make a last desperate stand—but as a calculating bitch with "round heels." . . . Nobody sees anybody truly but all through the flaws of their own egos. That is the way we all see each other in life.—*Tennessee Williams*

"Everybody around here keeps reading and rereading that," Hall said. "We're taking a fresh look at Stanley. Our Stanley, John C. Reilly, is not going to do one of those Brando imitations. We kicked the play around, excavating a bit. And nobody did that awful, pretentious, pseudo-intellectual talk, like 'I've got a concept.' Nobody had a 'concept.' "

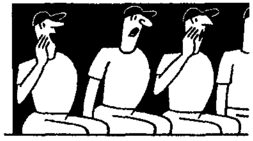
"I try not to carry baggage into rehearsal," Richardson said. Somewhat self-consciously, she lit a Vogue Superslim cigarette and inhaled deeply. "Twelve years ago, Sir Peter Hall, Edward's father, asked me to play Blanche, but I didn't feel ready for it. As Arthur Miller said, 'Streetcar' is a cry of pain."

"Yes," Hall said. "Like that Munch painting 'The Scream.' " Both director and star shuddered and opened their mouths wide—an illustrative joint scream.

Hall and Richardson said they had each bidden temporary farewell to their spouses and children and hidden themselves away until opening night. "Absolutely necessary," Richardson said, crushing out her cigarette. "A few nights a week, I exile myself to a small office apartment. I have to give up going home so I can work on the piece. The part of Blanche is one of the most brilliant parts ever written for a woman. Tennessee writes better for women than any other writer, and that includes Shakespeare. Blanche is the best."

—*Lillian Ross*

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL SOFTBALL



Over coffee in the cafeteria of the Rayburn House Office Building early Thursday morning, several congressional staffers acknowledged the obvious: baseball had come to Washington, and the politics of sport was threatening to supplant the sport of politics. "I bumped into this reporter, and he was all important, like, 'I'm here to cover the hearings,' " one man said. "Well, we have hearings here every day. I mean, I like baseball, but our priorities are out of order."

"It's hero-worship, that's all it is," another man replied, shaking his head.

Upstairs, inside the chambers of the Committee on Government Reform, the steroid hearings soon began—and demonstrated that hero-worship is thriving, in the halls of Congress, at least. Jim Bunning, the junior senator from Kentucky, and a Hall of Fame pitcher, was the first to testify, and encomiums were quick to follow. Candice Miller (R., Mich.) wanted to let Bunning know that she was grateful that he'd pitched for her home-town Detroit Tigers. She'd even heard he threw a no-hitter. John McHugh (R., N.Y.), for his part, said that he'd visited Cooperstown in 1996 to watch Bunning's Hall of Fame induction—a memorable experience.

Nearly eight hours later, after various passing tributes to Nellie Fox, Mickey Mantle, and Henry Aaron, the urge to be a part of the national pastime had not subsided. Linda Sanchez (D., Calif.) leaned forward and spoke into her microphone: "Let me just start by saying that I'm a huge baseball fan." Jose Serrano (D., N.Y.) looked out at the panel of assembled ballplayers—seated, left to right: Mr. Jose Canseco, Mr. Sammy Sosa, Mr. Mark McGwire, Mr. Rafael Palmeiro, Mr. Curt Schilling—and asked them not to think of his colleagues as legislators. "Think of us as no different than the people you see in the stands," he said.

Meanwhile, some of the athletes seemed to be testing their political chops. Mark McGwire's teary insistence that we focus on positives, not negatives, his repeated assertions that he was there to talk about the future, not the past—it all might have played better on the stump. And Curt Schilling, the most actively political of the bunch (he campaigned for President Bush last fall, and seems even to have adopted Bush's walk), saw fit to mention that his father, his brother-in-law, and his cousin had all worn the uniform—the military uniform. During an intermission, he lingered to shake hands with the parents of a teen-ager who'd committed suicide after quitting steroids. "Maybe we can make a difference," Schilling said, and winked.

There was some genuine antagonism in the room, as when Elijah Cummings (D., Md.) lectured Elliot Pellman, a Major League Baseball physician: "In the words of my mother, you've got motion, commotion, emotion, and no results." But for every Cummings there was an Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.), who, as the proceedings dragged on into evening, or what the committee chairman, Tom Davis (R., Va.), called "extra innings," actually saw fit to *re*-read Rafael Palmeiro's irrelevant testimony: "My parents and I came to the United States after fleeing the Communist tyranny that still reigns over my homeland of Cuba. We came seeking freedom." Her priorities in order, she hastened to add that Palmeiro was a courageous opponent of Fidel Castro.

Gil Gutknecht (R., Minn.) said at one point, "This has been one of the most fascinating hearings I have ever participated in, and I've been in Congress now ten years." Thus informed, a congressional novice, sitting in the back, vowed never to return. In the course of eleven hours, no new information emerged about who has used steroids. Actually, strike that: Paul Kanjorski (D., Penn.) returned from a break and reported that a member of Congress had just confessed to using steroids as a teen-ager, back in 1967. ("They were animal-grade," he said.) Like the players, though, Kanjorski wasn't naming any names.

The best remark of the day came, oddly, from Mark McGwire. Responding to a question about what he could do to alleviate the steroid problem, he said, "Whatever anybody can do to improve it so there's no more meetings like this, I'm all for it." The motion is hereby seconded.

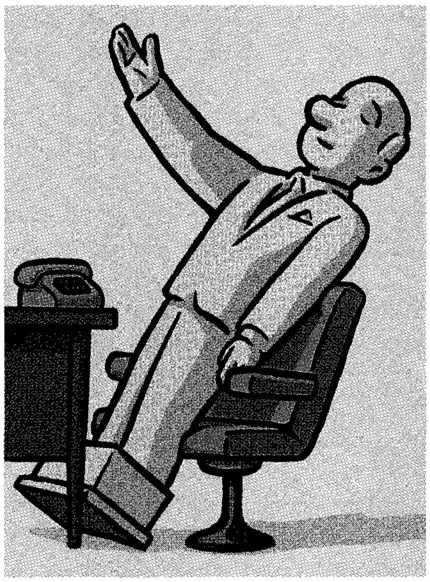
—*Ben McGrath*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
LOCAL ZEROES

Three years ago, Richard Scrushy embodied the hoariest of American myths. He was the home-town boy made good, the scrappy local who went from the community college to the executive suite. His town was Birmingham, Alabama, and his company was HealthSouth, a medical giant beloved by Wall Street and central to Birmingham's economic well-being. Scrushy was eccentric—while serving as HealthSouth's C.E.O., he released a country-music record, sponsored a girl group, and co-hosted a bizarre talk show with the former child star Jason Hervey, from "The Wonder Years"—but he was also rich and famous. In Birmingham, the locals called him King Richard, and they were surrounded by Scrushy tributes: a life-size bronze statue outside the HealthSouth Medical Center, a Richard M. Scrushy Campus at Jefferson State Community College, a Richard M. Scrushy Parkway. But the kingdom rested on a foundation of lies. Between 1996 and 2002, HealthSouth overstated its profits by $2.7 billion, according to prosecutors. Seventeen of its executives have pleaded guilty to cooking the books. Scrushy, who is now on trial for his alleged role in the fraud, insists that he knew nothing about it, but that has made little difference. The statue and most of the nameplates are gone, and today Scrushy embodies another American tale: the local hero turned local zero.

As the key figures in the recent wave of corporate scandals—Bernie Ebbers, of WorldCom; John Rigas, of Adelphia; Kenneth Lay, of Enron; Scrushy himself—finally get their day in court, what's most striking is how similar their stories are. They all presided over companies that they essentially built from nothing. They all treated these companies as their own personal property. And they all came to be dominant figures in their home towns: Ebbers in Clinton, Mississippi; Rigas in Coudersport, Pennsylvania; Lay in Houston; and Scrushy in Birmingham. Some of these ponds are smaller than others, but in each instance the soon-to-be-disgraced C.E.O. was the biggest fish around.

In part, these C.E.O.s mattered so much simply because their companies did. Adelphia and the Rigas family accounted for nearly forty per cent of Coudersport's annual tax haul. HealthSouth employed thirty-five hundred people and, like Enron and WorldCom, turned many of its employees into millionaires, who, in turn, enriched the local merchants. Local people also invested heavily (and, for a time, happily) in the stock of these companies, and the towns benefitted from the publicity. Just as important, the bosses were active patrons who showered their largesse on their communities. (Ebbers even taught Sunday school and used his riding mower to trim his neighbors' lawns.) They were latter-day versions of George Pullman, the railroad-car magnate who in 1880 built an entire town for workers and their families, presiding over it like a feudal lord. No doubt, for today's C.E.O.s, the Boss Hogg arrangement was very pleasant, and, even now, what's left of their reputations may help them in court. (Or not—Ebbers was convicted on multiple fraud counts last week, but then his trial was in New York.) In the long run, though, the acclaim did as much to destroy these men as it did to get them cast in bronze.



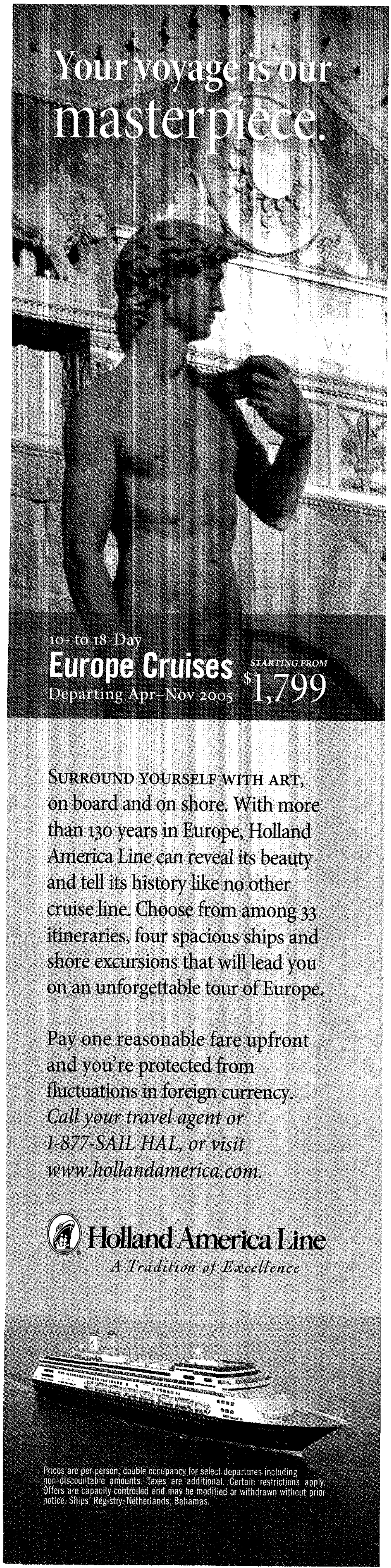
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Local stardom is destructive because it exacerbates one of the biggest problems that modern American C.E.O.s face: hubris. A recent study by the finance professors Ulrike Malmendier and Geoffrey Tate, for instance, shows that companies run by "superstar" C.E.O.s—those who've won major awards from the business press—underperform their competitors and the market as a whole in the years after they win their awards, while the C.E.O.s themselves begin spending more time on things that don't help their shareholders (such as writing books or making country-music records). A study of a hundred recent corporate crises suggests that bosses who are charismatic autocrats are "a major source of organizational decline." Too much publicity and self-congratulation, in other words, can be bad for business. And no one gets as much good publicity or as much positive reinforcement as a home-town hero.

In the book "Why Smart Executives Fail," Sydney Finkelstein, of Dartmouth, observes that "spectacularly unsuccessful" people (mere failure doesn't qualify; you have to wreak havoc and ruin lives) have certain traits in common. These people see themselves and their companies as "dominating their environments." They demand total allegiance and have the answer to every problem. And they identify themselves almost completely with their companies. Local heroes are especially vulnerable to these vices, since everyone in town is always sucking up to them.

It is ironic that the biggest frauds in American history were presided over by local hotshots, because local hotshots are the ones who deserve much of the credit for revitalizing the American economy in the past twenty years. Think of the homespun entrepreneurialism of Wal-Mart, Dell, and Microsoft. Free-wheeling businessmen like Bernie Ebbers were appealing because they had panache and guts. They weren't the dull and unimaginative stiffs who populated the offices of old-line corporations; they were outsiders and visionaries, ready to shake up the establishment. But the recent round of scandals suggests that the cult of the billionaire next door has its price. To get the Michael Dells of the world, we have to endure the Richard Scrushys. We've said goodbye to the organization man only to say hello to the huckster.

—*James Surowiecki*



10- to 18-Day
Europe Cruises
Departing Apr–Nov 2005
STARTING FROM
$1,799

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH ART, on board and on shore. With more than 130 years in Europe, Holland America Line can reveal its beauty and tell its history like no other cruise line. Choose from among 33 itineraries, four spacious ships and shore excursions that will lead you on an unforgettable tour of Europe.

Pay one reasonable fare upfront and you're protected from fluctuations in foreign currency. *Call your travel agent or 1-877-SAIL HAL, or visit www.hollandamerica.com.*

Holland America Line
A Tradition of Excellence

Prices are per person, double occupancy for select departures including non-discountable amounts. Taxes are additional. Certain restrictions apply. Offers are capacity controlled and may be modified or withdrawn without prior notice. Ships' Registry: Netherlands, Bahamas.

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

PLAYING OUT OF THE SNOW

Where to tee off in the off-season.

BY DAVID OWEN

I own a pair of snowshoes that I bought for golf. I have a photograph of myself wearing them on the first tee of the little nine-hole club that I belong to, in northwestern Connecticut, after a huge blizzard in 1996. Two of my regular golf buddies, also in snowshoes, are standing with me. This past December, we took up a new postseason activity: bowling.

Bowling is a surprisingly fun game, but it isn't golf. To be perfectly frank, snow golf isn't, either. No matter how merry my friends and I seem to be as we tromp around our buried course in our snowshoes, our deepest thoughts are always far away, among the verdant fairways, tees, and greens of summers past and summers future. Sometimes our longing becomes more than we can bear. When it does, we pack up our clubs, say goodbye to our wives and children, and head south for a while, to a place where golf can be played on real grass even in the middle of the winter. Which is to say, we go to the Bronx.

Many people don't realize that there is a golf course inside the New York City limits, but there are more than a dozen, and almost all of them are public courses that are open year-round. The Bronx has three full-sized eighteen-hole courses, Brooklyn has two, and Queens and Staten Island have four each. The Bronx also has a nine-hole course, Queens has two eighteen-hole par-three courses, and there is a country club that straddles the border between Queens and Nassau County. Eventually, the Bronx will have one more eighteen-hole course, a high-end daily-fee facility designed by Jack Nicklaus; it's under construction in Ferry Point Park, near the northern end of the Bronx Whitestone Bridge, on top of the old Ferry Point landfill. Of all the currently operating courses contained entirely within the city, all but one—Richmond County Country Club, on Staten Island—are owned by the City of New York. They charge modest greens fees, they give discounts to senior citizens, youngsters, and city residents, and they are open for play pretty much every day of the year except when the ground is covered with snow.

When my friends and I first travelled to the city for golf, our expectations were very low. Over the years, though, we have come to think of New York as an appealing winter golf destination, like Hilton Head or Myrtle Beach but easier to get to. As we cruise down I-684 on a frigid Sunday morning, heading for Pelham Bay or Marine Park or Dyker Beach—city courses whose names alone make winter seem less of a problem—we sometimes fantasize about a golf trip that we hope to take some January or February, a trip during which we'll play every one of the city's courses at least once. We'll probably stay in Manhattan, ideally at a hotel near Chelsea Piers, which has a driving range, and we'll carry our golf bags in travel covers that have wheels on them, to simplify getting on and off subways and buses. On our last night in town, after a blowout steak dinner at Smith & Wollensky, we'll get front-row seats for "The Lion King," and the next morning we'll roll our clubs up Eighth Avenue to Port Authority, for the two-hour bus ride home.

Ten years ago, I had to fly overnight from Phoenix to Newark by way of Las Vegas. The crowd that boarded the plane in Las Vegas consisted mainly of guys with beards and leather jackets who hadn't brought anything to read and women with arm tattoos trying to jam bottles into the mouths of crying babies. The plane smelled like cigarettes, even though no one was smoking. These passengers, I decided, represented three filtrations of human desperation: they had elected to use family vacation time to travel more than two thousand miles to lose money playing slot machines; they had decided to fly home after mid-

Golfers sometimes had to play around chunks of derelict cars, and there were tales of mobsters buried under fairways.

STEVE BRODNER

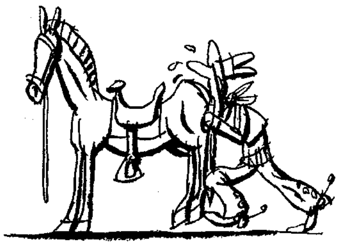
night so that they could get in as much money-losing as possible without having to pay for one more night in a hotel; and they lived in or near Newark. I had a similar experience this past New Year's Day, when five of my friends and I drove from Connecticut to Pelham Bay Park to play our first golf round of 2005. The people on the course that morning were playing golf in January on a municipal course in the Bronx; they didn't mind that some of the bunkers still had snow in them; and they had been willing to get up before dawn on the morning after New Year's Eve. (The day's first group teed off at six-thirty-five; by midmorning, there was a waiting list.)

Pelham Bay Park, which fills the northeastern corner of the Bronx, is the largest park in New York City. It covers a little more than twenty-seven hundred acres, is more than three times the size of Central Park, and contains almost ten per cent of all the park space owned by the city. It also contains two eighteen-hole golf courses, Pelham Bay and Split Rock, which are separated by woods and railroad tracks but share a Depression-era clubhouse. Pelham Bay was built in the early nineteen-hundreds. It was redesigned in 1934 by John R. Van Kleek, a prominent golf architect who fell on hard times after the Crash and was hired by Robert Moses to superintend a major citywide golf project, which was eventually funded by the Works Progress Administration. Van Kleek created Split Rock at the same time, and it is often said to be the best course in the city. Its sixth, seventh, and eighth holes have been called New York's Amen Corner, after the legendary sequence of holes at Augusta National Golf Club, where the Masters is held, and its ninth hole is a tough par-four on which golfers must avoid a tree that some people claim is the oldest white oak on the Eastern Seaboard. Split Rock was named after an enormous cracked glacial erratic at the edge of the property. According to local legend, Anne Hutchinson—the banished Massachusetts religious dissenter memorialized by the Hutchinson River and the Parkway—was hiding inside the crack when she was killed by Indians, in 1643. The rock was supposed to be dynamited during the construction of the New England Thruway, in the nineteen-fifties, but Theodore Kazimiroff, the founder of the Bronx County Historical Society, persuaded Moses to shift the roadway slightly to the north. A photograph of the rock hangs in the clubhouse today.

When my friends and I left home on New Year's morning, our yards were white with frost. By the time we reached the Hutch, the outside temperature had risen by ten degrees. We had watched it rise, digit by digit, on the thermometer in the car. Surprisingly, New York City is geographically well suited to off-season golf. The metropolitan area's urban heat-island effect and proximity to the Atlantic Ocean make the city noticeably warmer and less likely to accumulate snow than places farther inland and farther to the north. I felt so warm in the parking lot at Pelham that I left one of my sweaters in the car, and I took off the other one a couple of hours later and stuffed it into my golf bag. I was glad I had remembered to wear sunscreen.

There are places in Pelham Bay Park that seem almost like Big Sky Country, in comparison with the rest of the city. The property is edged, to the east, by Long Island Sound, and, to the south and west, by sweeping salt marshes. Three red-tailed hawks, flying low into a gusting headwind and flashing their tail feathers every time they tacked across the sun, watched us play the eleventh hole. Orchard Beach, which is part of the park and is just down the road from the entrance to the golf courses, has been referred to as New York City's Riviera, and there are holes where you have a stronger sense than you usually have in New York of being sort of close to salt water. The only real visual evidence of the lurking metropolis is Co-op City, just to the west. Maybe someday its bleak brick towers will be repurposed as a Florida-style golf community, with a bag drop near the entrance and a fleet of chauffeured golf carts ready to whisk residents to their tee times at Pelham Bay or Split Rock or Van Cortlandt or Mosholu or Ferry Point.

The greens that day were frozen solid, making them as firm as the greens at a U.S. Open, and they were impressively fast, considering that they hadn't been mowed in weeks. Ordinarily, the maintenance crew on a busy golf course will change all the hole locations every day or two, to spread around the wear on the putting surfaces, but cutting new holes isn't possible when the ground is like concrete. The crews on the city's courses cut two holes on each green before the coldest weather sets in, and you move the flag to the other hole after you've putted out. The fairways were firm, too. The hard ground can make a well-hit shot run forever, so you take less club and keep the ball low, like golfers in Scotland and Ireland and Oklahoma. After our round, my friends and I stopped in the grill room for beers and bacon cheeseburgers—our standing lunch order when we're on the road. The Pelham Bay/Split Rock clubhouse, which was built in 1936, looks a little like Monticello without the dome. It has a cobblestoned driveway and front courtyard, and neoclassical columns made of white Tuckahoe marble, and its interior retains many of the original Art Deco touches, along with the inevitable desecrations: cheap outdoor floodlights bolted to the hemispherical hammered-bronze light fixtures in the decaying Club Room, an institutional drinking fountain haphazardly installed next to one of two basalt-and-marble fireplaces. Above each mantel is a fading Surrealist mural by Allen Saalburg, who was a friend of Dorothy Parker, S. J. Perelman, Robert Benchley, and other early *New Yorker* contributors, and who, on another W.P.A.-era assignment, created murals in Tavern on the Green which have long since been painted over. Glass is missing from some of the round windows near the Club Room's vaulted ceiling, and the bottom corner of the front door appears to have been gnawed away, leaving a large gap through which the thing that did the gnawing presumably comes and goes at will. The building's furnace expired many years ago. The second or third time we played at Pelham, fires were roaring in both fireplaces when we arrived. I stood near one, warming my hands, and noticed that the burning logs stacked on the Art Deco andirons were oddly regular in shape, and that several of them were studded with glowing protuberances. Eventually, I realized that the protuberances were framing nails, and that the fuel in the hearth was not firewood but discarded lumber from the demolition of some building.



The city's golf courses used to be maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation, whose workers were not necessarily overeducated in agronomy. Conditions were marginal in all seasons. Golfers sometimes had to play around chunks of derelict cars, and there were tales of mobsters buried under fairways, swimming with the divots. In 1983, the city, after losing money on golf for years, privatized the entire enterprise. It auctioned twenty-year operating licenses, which required concessionaires to make significant capital investments and to pay the city a percentage of the revenues. In 1999 and 2000, following a dry summer, the city made a major investment of its own, and provided full irrigation systems for all but one of the courses. By 2002, New York had gone from losing two million dollars a year on golf to making more than four million, and the courses had improved dramatically.

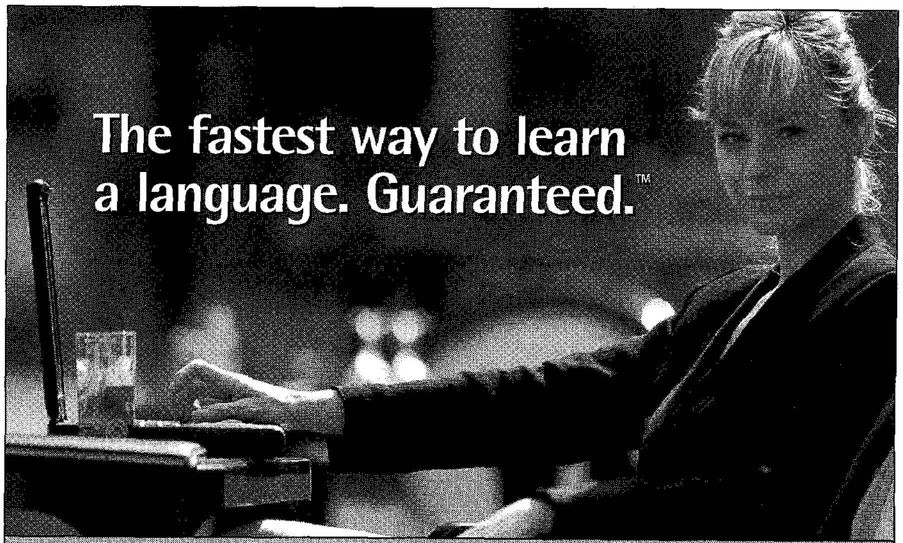
New York City's main golf concessionaire, with licenses for eight courses at seven city facilities, is American Golf Corporation, the largest golf-course operator in the country. This past January, after a snowstorm had shut down golf in the city for what would turn out to be several weeks, I drove to Staten Island to talk to Brian O'Hare, who at the time was American Golf's regional director for New York City. (He now works for Billy Casper Golf, which competes with American Golf in a number of markets outside the city.) O'Hare's office was at LaTourette Golf Course, on Richmond Hill Road. As I approached the clubhouse, I saw dozens of children sledding on a steep fairway, and I later asked O'Hare—who grew up on Staten Island

SPOT DRAWINGS BY BENOÎT JACQUES

and learned to play at LaTourette—whether he worried about damage to the turf. He said that sledding wasn't a problem, and added, "Even the children who play football on the golf course seem to know which grass to stay away from. You may have noticed that the course isn't fenced. That's a testament to the community we're in."

LaTourette Golf Course and the large wooded park surrounding it are laid out on what was once the farm of John J. Crocheron, a French Huguenot who fought in the War of 1812. According to a family historian, around the middle of the century Crocheron gave the property to his daughter, Ann, and her husband, David LaTourette, and moved to Alabama. Crocheron's gift included a large Federal-style brick mansion with panoramic views of Lower New York Bay. The mansion was occupied until 1910 by a succession of LaTourettes, a number of whom came to unfortunate ends: several died in childhood, one was shot accidentally by a neighbor while wandering in delirium, one died while fighting for the Confederacy in the Civil War, and one is rumored to have committed suicide by hanging himself in the attic. The farm is thought to be one of the last in New York City to have employed oxen as draft animals. In 1928, the city bought it and turned it into a public park, and John R. Van Kleek designed the golf course. The mansion became the clubhouse in 1936, was designated an individual New York City landmark in 1968, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

One of the best things that ever happened to the old LaTourette mansion occurred in 2001: it caught on fire. The fire started in a wastebasket in an office on the ground floor and did extensive damage. American Golf, which was responsible for the building's reconstruction, awarded the project to Page Ayres Cowley Architects, a Manhattan firm with considerable experience in the restoration and adaptive reuse of damaged historic structures. Page Cowley told me, "When we started, it was a typical insurance claim. The adjuster said, O.K., the floor is burned, replace the floor; the plaster's missing, put up Sheetrock; the windows are blown out, replace them with something prefab. But as we went


The fastest way to learn a language. Guaranteed.™

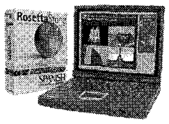
Award-winning software successfully used by U.S. State Department diplomats, Fortune 500® executives and millions of people worldwide.

Finally, a different approach that has millions of people talking. Using the award-winning Dynamic Immersion™ method, our interactive software teaches without translation, memorization or grammar drills. Combining thousands of real-life images and the voices of native speakers in a step-by-step immersion process, our programs successfully replicate the experience of learning your first language. Guaranteed to teach faster and easier than any other language product or your money back. No questions asked.

"...your program is the absolute best, bar none. I am shocked at how quickly I learn."
Michael Murphy – Texas, USA

"Stupendous...the juxtaposition of text, sound and picture was masterful. The quality of both sound and graphics was first rate."
The Boston Globe

Rosetta Stone is available for learning:
Arabic • Chinese • Danish • Dutch • English • French German • Greek • Hebrew • Hindi • Indonesian Italian • Japanese • Korean • Latin • Pashto • Polish Portuguese • Russian • Spanish • Swahili • Swedish Thai • Turkish • Vietnamese • Welsh



Level 1 CD-ROM ...$195
Level 2 CD-ROM ...$225
BEST VALUE!
Level 1 & 2 Set.....$329
Personal Edition. Solutions for organizations also available.

FREE SHIPPING

Call or buy online and receive FREE Overnight Shipping in the US.
RosettaStone.com/nys035s
1-800-788-5141
Use promotional code nys035s when ordering.

RosettaStone®
Language Learning Success

THE NEW YORKER

"CRUSH HOUR"
by Edward Sorel
Cover date: January 31, 1994

Limited-edition lithographic print available only at
WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM
(Special offers and discounts available when you shop online.)
or phone 1-800-897-8666

Numbered and signed by the artist. Only 500 available.

FRAMED: $395
MAT ONLY: $280

Plus shipping & handling.
Tax charged where applicable.

CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company

So many courses,
so little summer.

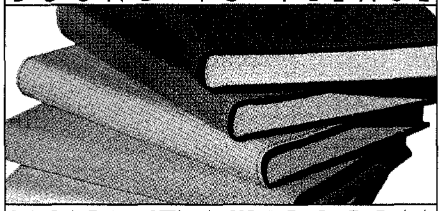
Yale Summer Session offers over 130 full- credit courses taught in intensive 5-week terms. It's not a pre-college program but is open to qualified high school juniors and seniors. Students live on campus and take classes alongside current Yale undergraduates. If you're ready for a challenging new direction, experience Yale this summer.

For information and course listings, please go to
www.yale.edu/summer.
email: summer.session@yale.edu
203 432-2430

LUX ET VERITAS

YALE
SUMMER SESSION 2005

HANDMADE BOOKS
BOUND TO PLEASE



WWW.JENNIBICK.COM

CAN YOU GO BACK WHILE STILL MOVING FORWARD?
The New School Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts
(800) 862-5039 WWW.NSU.NEWSCHOOL.EDU/BD
INFORMATION SESSION: MONDAY, APRIL 18, 6 P.M.

Undiscovered Italy
Villa Rentals
from the Alps to the vineyards,
from the hill towns to the sea
THE PARKER COMPANY FREE CATALOG
www.theparkercompany.com 800-280-2811

bike riders
THE ART OF TRAVELING WELL℠
BIKING, WALKING & GUEST CHEF ADVENTURES
NEW ENGLAND, CANADA & EUROPE
FREE CATALOG
800.473.7040 | www.bikeriderstours.com

through this I thought, Why just put it back the way it was?"

Cowley's firm had recently completed an award-winning five-year restoration of Walt Whitman's final residence, in Camden, New Jersey—a modest frame house that was the poet's home for the last eight years of his life and was the only house that he ever owned. At the Library of Congress, Cowley and her associates found old glass negatives showing interior details that had been cropped from published photographs. "Walt Whitman lived in a mess," she told me. "There were crumpled papers everywhere, and there were dishes stacked on the windowsills. The photographs we studied were taken by the artist Thomas Eakins, a good friend of his, and they helped us understand the life of a working man who lived at the poverty line and survived at the grace and favor of his publisher and his patrons. He was a brilliant poet, and he was a cheapskate. The furniture belonged to his housekeeper, who lived in the back of the house. It didn't matter to him if the wallpaper matched—just stick it on the wall. At one point, we told the state, which operates the house as a museum, 'If it doesn't match, we know it's right.' "

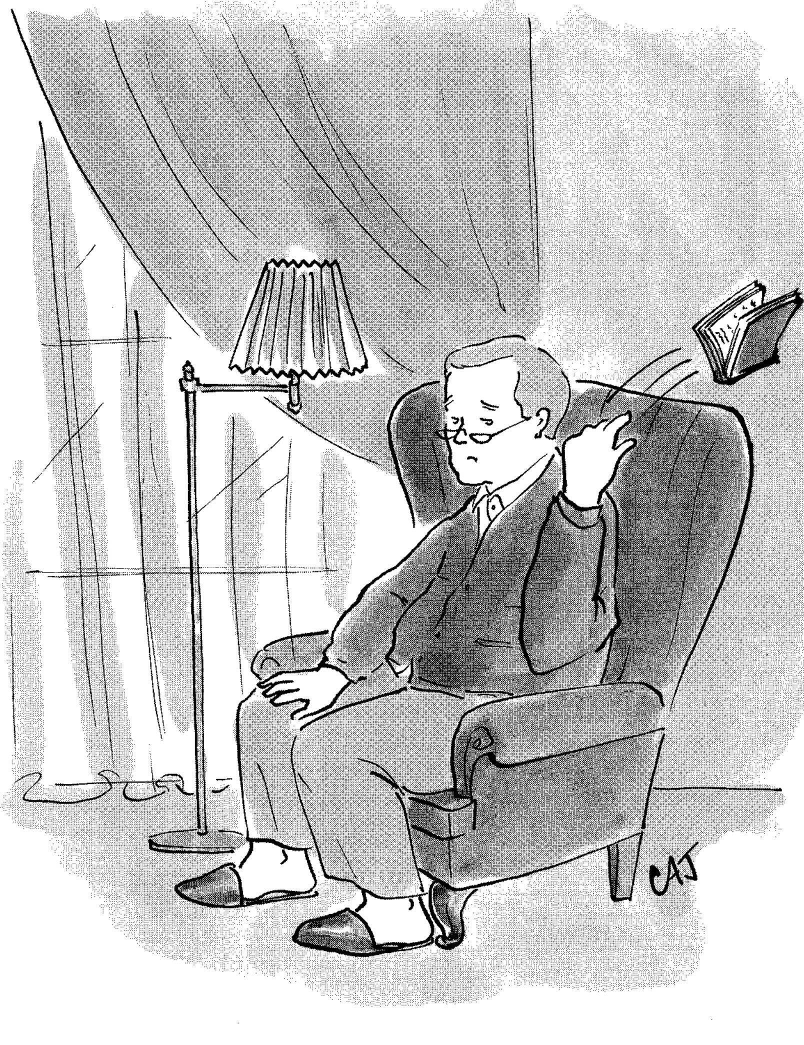
Old photographs—from the Parks Department's extensive archives—were important in the LaTourette project, too. Cowley persuaded the insurance company to pay for architectural details it hadn't felt were necessary, such as mahogany sashes for the windows, and to allow her, instead of replacing unused features (the showers on the second floor, for instance), to re-create elements (such as the unobstructed central hallway on the ground floor) that had been obliterated long before the fire. She also persuaded American Golf to spend nearly a million dollars of its own money. The result is terrific—not a museum, by any means, but a living landmark that gives the city's golfers a powerful sense of what it must have been like to visit the home of a wealthy nineteenth-century Staten Island landowner.

All this was done without taxpayers' money, and with considerable risk for American Golf. New York's golf licensees have no equity in the properties they manage. Every capital investment they make must generate enough revenues to pay for itself within the twenty-year life of a city license, and they can't cover their costs by raising greens fees—or by assessing members, the way private clubs do—because all fees are established by the Parks Department. American Golf believes that improving facilities is good for business, because it attracts new golfers and builds loyalty among regulars. Brian O'Hare told me, "Years and years ago, I don't think anyone really cared about whether or not the grill room was beautifully redone. If it had beer, coffee, hot dogs, and some sandwiches, you were good. Now golfers expect a lot more." Following the project at LaTourette, Cowley helped the company create license-renewal applications that included ambitious clubhouse renovations—among them the addition of banquet facilities to three of its courses, a potential source of profit for both the company and the city. In its most recent agreement, which covers six of its eight courses, the company said it would invest more than twenty-seven million dollars in additional capital improvements. Much of that money will be spent on continued course upgrades, but large sums will also go into the clubhouses, including about five million dollars for Pelham Bay/Split Rock, where, among other things, the Club Room will be restored to its original appearance. Cowley and the Parks Department hope the building will receive a landmark designation, and she told me that she and American Golf are proceeding as though it had one already. She also said, "I can so easily picture Noël Coward in that room, sitting at a piano, writing a tune to welcome golfers from the eighteenth green."

New York City used to have many more golf courses than it does today. Of the ones that have become extinct, Bayside Links, in Queens, was probably the best. It was designed by the legendary golf architect Alister MacKenzie, whose other American courses include Augusta National, which is ranked No. 2 on *Golf Digest's* most recent "100 Greatest" list, and Cypress Point Club, in Pebble Beach, California, which is ranked No. 3. Bayside was built on farmland, part of which is now occupied by the athletic fields of Bayside High School, and it opened in 1932, a few months before Augusta National. At around the same time, MacKenzie—who was in such dire financial straits that he was "reduced to playing golf with four clubs and a Woolworth ball"—wrote a book in the hope of making a little money. He died in 1934, and the manuscript was lost for decades, but the book finally came out in 1995, as "The Spirit of St. Andrews." In it, MacKenzie mentions Bayside and argues for the creation of more municipal courses, which, he says, "would help enormously in increasing the health, the virility and the prosperity of nations, and would do much to counteract discontent and Bolshevism." Bayside was torn up in the fifties to make way for a residential neighborhood—the fate of most of the city's abandoned golf courses, according to Daniel Wexler, who is the author of "The Missing Links: America's Greatest Lost Golf Courses & Holes." MacKenzie might, nevertheless, find a few things to like about golf in New York today. Golf is unusual among participatory sports in that it often throws strangers together for four or five hours, giving them the chance to get to know one another, at least where their opinions about Tiger Woods are concerned.

Very early on a crisp Sunday morning in mid-February, after the city's big January snow had melted, my regular golf-and-bowling buddy Bob Hacker and I drove to Brooklyn for a round at Dyker Beach Golf Course, near the approach to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. We stopped in Westchester to buy gas and doughnuts, and as I was filling my tank I noticed a guy at another pump who was wearing golf shoes: a brother. Traffic was light, and Hacker and I arrived long before our tee time. We drank coffee in Dyker's sixty-nine-year-old clubhouse—which Page Cowley had described to me, accurately, as "a French-inspired gentleman's house," and which will soon receive a major renovation—and ran into Terry Byrne, who is the president of the Shore View Golf Club, a group of a hundred and forty men who play most of their golf at Dyker. The club is six years older than the clubhouse. Shore View's members include carpenters, cops, lawyers, firefighters, accountants, masons, city employees—a typical mix for a New York City golf course. (Byrne, whose parents were born in Ireland, is a plumbing supervisor for the New York City Housing Authority.) Shore View controls a two-hour block of tee times every Sunday morning, thanks to an agreement that the city made with the club when the courses were privatized. The city wanted to protect golfers who had been especially supportive of local golf in the past, and it granted official charters to various groups at all the courses. Dyker also has a women's club, a seniors' club, and an unofficial club for the members of a Korean church.

Just before nine o'clock, the starter put Hacker and me with a Manhattan structural engineer who moved to this country from Italy twenty years ago and took up golf in 2004, and a grumbling Brooklyn guy. There are linguistically distinct ancient tribes in the Kalahari Desert region whose members are known as the click-speaking people of southern Africa, and there are linguistically distinct ancient tribes in the Brooklyn region whose members could be known as the fuck-speaking people of New York—and this guy was one of those: "Where the fuck is my ball? I don't mind losing a golf ball if I hit it in the fuckin' woods, but that drive was right up the fuckin' middle of the fuckin' fairway. What the fuck!" We all got along great, however. Two days later, I threw my clubs back in the car and drove to Van Cortlandt Park, in the Bronx. Van Cortlandt is the oldest public golf course in the country. It opened on July 6, 1895, when golf was just beginning to catch on in the United States. (My home club was formed two years later.) I played with a young man I met on the first tee, a tennis pro at the Westchester Country Club, and we talked mostly about whether playing tennis is good or bad for a golf swing, and vice versa. We saw a red fox run across the sixth fairway and through



THE MAN WHO KNEW ENOUGH

a gap in the fence, and we both played reasonably well. When we finished, I lingered in the clubhouse, which was built in 1902 and has what may be the greatest locker room in all golf. It's on the second floor, at the top of a massive staircase, and it looks like a Victorian attic. All the dark old roof framing is exposed, and there are two levels of simple wooden lockers, with holes drilled into them for ventilation. Among the historically significant golfers who have visited there, according to the Parks Department, are Babe Ruth, Willie Mays, Jackie Robinson, Joe Louis, and the Three Stooges.

That afternoon, I met Hacker at Clearview Golf Course, in Queens, for my second round of the day. The temperature was close to fifty degrees, and the course was packed, mostly with Koreans, who are probably the second most golf-addled ethnic group in New York, after the Irish. The starter, who was also Korean, paired Hacker and me with two Korean men. One of them turned out to be the retired owner of a Manhattan wig shop. He told me that his clientele had included many famous actresses, among them Nancy Sinatra and Ann-Margret, but that actresses are undesirable wig customers because they don't like to pay. The best customers, he said, are strippers, who favor huge blond wigs and don't care what anything costs. We finished our round just as a very orange sun was setting beyond Manhattan, and we watched endless ribbons of white and red car lights unspooling across the Throgs Neck Bridge, which looms over the northern end of the course. Six days later, it snowed again.

During coming weeks, as the winter slips away and the courses in my part of the country begin to reopen, my golf buddies and I will stop going to New York City to play. We will still take road trips, because every spring our home course stays closed longer than just about any other course in the northeastern United States, but we will no longer have to venture so far from home to find puttable grass. Our favorite springtime course, at the moment, is the Links at Union Vale, in Dutchess County, New York, a little more than an hour to the west of our town (and fifteen or twenty minutes closer than the Bronx). We first played there last year, and we liked it so much that we returned several weekends in a row.

It isn't surprising that we like the Links, I suppose, because the course was built by New York City golfers. In the late nineties, a group of Irish players from Van Cortlandt, Pelham Bay/Split Rock, and other courses in the metropolitan area got fed up with the summer crowds and decided to build a place of their own that was within weekend commuting distance. Roughly eighty of them bought shares, at ten thousand dollars apiece. They then found two hundred acres of cattle-grazing farmland and hired Stephen Kay and Doug Smith to design a course for them. The investors knew of Kay because he had done some work on the bunkers at Van Cortlandt, and because he had designed an Irish-style course, called the Links of North Dakota, that they liked very much. Kay grew up in Queens. He told me recently that he chose his profession as a teen-ager, after reading an essay about golf architecture, in *Golf Digest*, by Herbert Warren Wind.

For the Union Vale investors, Kay and Smith built an extraordinary golf course, and they did it on a budget of just two and a half million dollars—a pittance nowadays. (Bull's Bridge Golf Club, an unfinished private course that my friends and I pass on the way to and from Union Vale, has already cost more than twenty million dollars; recently had a $1.4-million lien placed on it by its architect, Tom Fazio; has been threatened with bankruptcy; still has no clubhouse; and has an initiation fee of more than a hundred thousand dollars.) Union Vale now has five hundred members, among them representatives of the many Irish golf associations in and around New York City. They allow themselves preferential tee times and charge themselves reduced fees, but their club is open to everyone and their clubhouse is well stocked with Guinness. The course itself looks and plays more than a little like a seaside course in Ireland. There are Irish voices in the golf shop, in the clubhouse, and on the driving range, and if you stand on the first tee on a cool spring morning and close your eyes you can almost believe that you're back in the old country. By which, of course, I mean New York. ♦

THE
NEW YORKER
ONLINE

newyorker.com

THIS WEEK'S
WEB EXCLUSIVE:

Margaret Talbot talks
about Antonin Scalia
and the Supreme Court.

*An archive of hundreds of past
Web exclusives, including
Q. & A.s, cover galleries,
slide shows, Web sightings,
and more.*

*A decade of New Yorker
Film Notes.*

*A calendar of New Yorker
events across the country.*

SHOUTS & MURMURS

DISENGAGEMENTS

BY LARRY DOYLE

Brynne Scavullo and Sean Martini hooked up at a party two weeks ago. Ms. Scavullo and Mr. Martini hooked up again at a party the following weekend. When they failed to hook up at a party this past Saturday, Ms. Scavullo lamented that it was the end of what could have been a beautiful arrangement.

Tracy Hanky and Jerome Panke began dating last November based on a shared amusement at the thought of their potential hyphenated surname. In late February, Ms. Hanky extended the riff to include "having a little Hanky-Panke," at which point Mr. Panke felt the joke had played itself out.

Cyndra Pettibone's two-year office flirtation with Stanley Bendix came to an abrupt end last week when Mr. Bendix's cubicle, adjacent to the women's rest room, was moved as part of an unrelated legal settlement.

Gwynne Weidner and Ian Buckman met on March 5th at the Hole, a local pub. Mr. Buckman proposed shortly before 1 A.M., and Ms. Weidner accepted. Mr. Buckman rescinded the proposal at approximately 4 A.M., at which point Ms. Weidner allegedly assaulted Mr. Buckman with his five-hundred-dollar Bose clock radio, according to police reports. Charges are pending, but both parties agree that the relationship is probably over.

Lara Bernard and Evan Farquar began an online romance in July, 2004, after Ms. Bernard purchased a first edition of "The Lost Princess of Oz" on eBay and discovered in it a beautiful inscription that Mr. Farquar had written to a previous girlfriend. A shared interest in the beloved characters of L. Frank Baum blossomed into online fantasy role-playing, with Ms. Bernard as Dorothy and Mr. Farquar as the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, the Mayor of Munchkin Land, a flying monkey, or any combination thereof; and vice versa. When Ms. Bernard and Mr. Farquar finally met in person at the Chittenango, New York, Ozfest earlier this month, it became apparent that there had been dissembling on both sides. Ms. Bernard and Mr. Farquar agreed to fornicate and part.

Kym Wrona and Douglas Pasternak struck up a conversation on February 22nd at the Pink Tiger, Ms. Wrona's place of employment. Their budding relationship hit an impasse on March 3rd when Ms. Wrona learned that Mr. Pasternak is married and has four children, all under the age of six. Mr. Pasternak is hoping for reconciliation, and has been tipping accordingly.

In April, 2004, Sierra Duplaines and Hank Russell "met cute" at an anti-abortion rally organized by Mr. Russell outside the Moline Women's Health Co-Op, which is run by Dr. Duplaines. Contrary to their expectations of a screwball romance in the "Adam's Rib" mold, what followed was eleven months of soul-crushing ugliness occasionally relieved by only slightly better than average sex. Dr. Duplaines is now reading all the available literature on lesbianism and Mr. Russell is spearheading an effort to pass a constitutional amendment taking away a woman's right to talk.

Ivy Wheeler has declared her torrid six-year affair with Kyle Brindley to be all a figment of Mr. Brindley's fevered imagination. Mr. Brindley responds that Ms. Wheeler is simply angry about his recent fling with the Bush twins.

Lynda Schmeltzer and Geoff Punt began dating in November, ending Ms. Schmeltzer's long string of unhealthy relationships with assholes. Mr. Punt is now an asshole. ♦

New from
New York Times
bestselling author
Elizabeth George

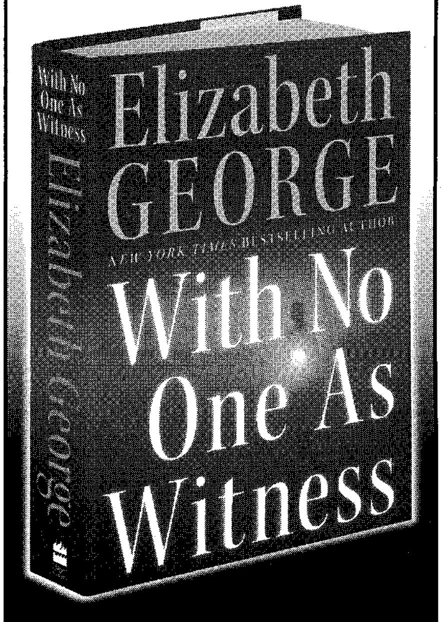
Millions know him
from PBS's "Mystery!"

Now, Scotland Yard's
Thomas Lynley
takes on his most
thrilling case yet.

"Enough twists and shocks . . . to startle even the most jaded reader."
—*Wall Street Journal*

"An outstanding and explosive addition to a popular series."
—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"George is a master."
—*Chicago Tribune*



Meet Elizabeth George on tour.
For details, visit
www.elizabethgeorgeonline.com

To receive notification of future events
and publications by Elizabeth George
visit www.AuthorTracker.com

HarperCollins*Publishers*
www.harpercollins.com
Also Available from HarperAudio

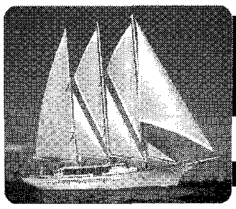
A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY
the second home search company
A unique personalized service.
860-824-8193 www.secondhomesearch.com

STANFORD
UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER
Hospital & Clinics • School of Medicine
Want to know what Stanford doctors and researchers have to say about your health?
Stanford Health Videos $29.99 each
http://healthlibrary.stanford.edu/videolibrary/

RETIRE TO CHAPEL HILL, NC
Fearrington Village is full of bluebirds, hollyhocks, belted cows, and fascinating people of all ages.
800.277.0130 www.fearrington.com

THE SECRET OF WELL-DRESSED WOMEN EAST TO WEST
CLOTHES OF VINTAGE & CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE TEXTILES
IN NYC MARCH 10–APRIL 2
ASIATICA
complete trunk show schedule:
www.asiaticakc.com or 800.731.0831

for the discriminating vacationer…
a commitment to excellence
Kiawah Island
Rentals and Sales
Pam Harrington Exclusives
http://www.kiawahexclusives.com
1-800-845-6966



The most popular sailing cruises in the Virgin Islands, Chesapeake, and New England.
THE Arabella
www.cruisearabella.com
800-395-1343
Also available for corporate & private charter

The salt air & sea of the Maine coast are yours . . .
on a private peninsula in Casco Bay
www.rockgardensinn.com 207-389-1339
ROCK GARDENS INN & Cottages

ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE NEW PITCH

Do ads still work?

BY KEN AULETTA

In the introduction to his 1963 best-seller, "Confessions of an Advertising Man," David Ogilvy apologized for writing "in the old-fashioned first person singular." In the intervening decades—the years of, among others, Madonna and Donald Trump—that modest impulse has faded. The inclination now is more toward emphatic self-promotion. Linda Kaplan Thaler, who today enjoys an Ogilvy-like reputation as one of advertising's creative talents, co-wrote a book on marketing in 2003, and advised her peers, "Don't worry about whether the news is good or bad. *Just get covered*. . . . PR breeds PR."

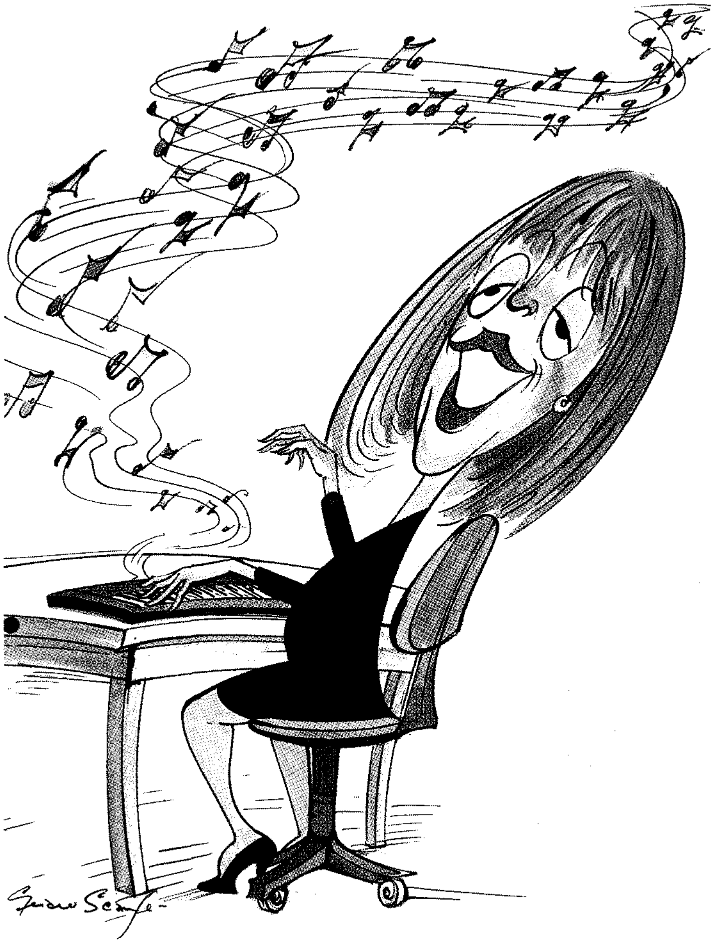
I thought of Thaler when I began to look into whether advertising, which plays such a large role in the American economy, might be ailing, and how it was being affected by new media and by new technologies. (Last year, more than five hundred billion dollars was spent on advertising and marketing in the United States—half the worldwide total.) Thaler still believes that the old-fashioned advertising model works; and it seems to work for her. Although the industry's growth has slowed in recent years and profit margins have shrivelled, the Kaplan Thaler Group, which she founded in 1997, has flourished.

Thaler, who is fifty-four, has been around long enough to have seen the business change. In Ogilvy's day, within a single mile of Madison Avenue one could find America's—and therefore the world's—most celebrated ad agencies: Ogilvy Benson & Mather, Young & Rubicam, McCann-Erickson, Grey Advertising, Ted Bates & Company, J. Walter Thompson, Benton & Bowles. Agency people saw one another while dining or drinking at Pavillon, "21," and other establishments. The business was romanticized and mocked in popular culture, sometimes as a trade where failed poets became embittered copywriters and had too many Martinis along the way. It was portrayed as manipulative, in books like "The Hidden Persuaders"; as ruthless, in movies like "The Hucksters"; and as innocent (or sinister) fun, in the memoirs of some of its practitioners.

The path to profits was once fairly straightforward: clients paid agencies fifteen per cent of each advertising dollar, and most of those dollars went to the three television networks. In 1965, advertisers could reach eighty per cent of their most coveted viewers—those between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine—just by buying time on CBS, NBC, or ABC. "You could put together a media plan in an hour," Roy Bostock, the former chairman and C.E.O. of the MacManus Group, recalls. "When we introduced Scope, in the mid-sixties, we were able with television advertising in the first four weeks of the ad campaign to reach more than ninety per cent of U.S. television households ten times."

By the late nineties, some clients began to rebel against paying a flat commission, preferring fees, usually billed by the hour. (Linda Kaplan Thaler says, "I sometimes worry that clients are paying us for the hours we spend working on projects rather than the worth of the ideas.") And the agencies have long since left Madison Avenue—a street now frequented mostly for its luxury stores—for other parts of Manhattan and the rest of the world. But the name remains a synonym for an industry that bears little resemblance to what it once was.

Many of the old agencies have long since been absorbed by larger firms, which themselves have been absorbed. Ogilvy's firm was acquired in a hostile takeover, in 1989, by England's WPP Group. Sixteen years later, five companies claim nearly two-thirds of all advertising and marketing dollars, and own the most storied names of the mid-twentieth century. These firms, which call themselves marketing companies, are the WPP Group, whose initials stand for Wire & Plastic Products, a former manufacturer of wire baskets; the Omnicom Group and the Interpublic Group, in the United States; France's Havas; and the Publicis Groupe, also French, which acquired the Kaplan Thaler Group in 2002. They provide more services than the traditional ad agencies used to, including public relations, design, and event planning, which now account for about half of their revenues. These days, many functions of the old agencies are, in effect, subcontracted. For instance, buying advertising time might fall to a specialized company like MediaVest. (MediaVest, which is owned by the Publicis Groupe, buys advertising in bulk the way Wal-Mart buys merchandise in bulk.) MediaVest's C.E.O., Laura Desmond, points out that firms like hers decide where to target the dollars, a role once performed by the ad agency's account executives; a buyer's fee is typically two to four per cent, which leaves that much less for an agency.



Linda Kaplan Thaler believes in old-fashioned advertising.

GERALD SCARFE

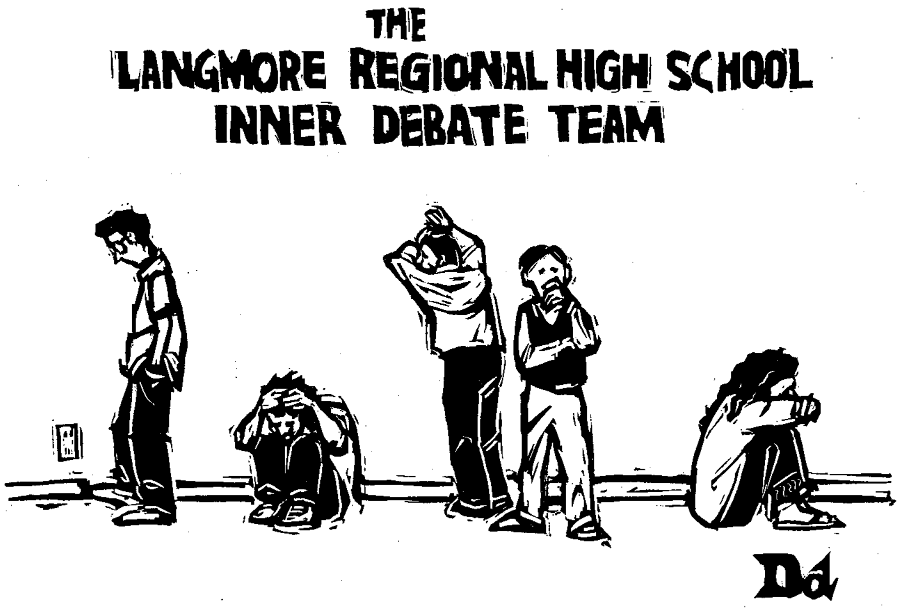
Not everyone in the industry thinks that size is a prerequisite for success. Rob Shepardson, a founding partner in Shepardson Stern + Kaminsky, a downtown Manhattan agency that employs seventy people, believes that the giant holding companies subvert creativity, and that companies like WPP are no more capable of getting their varied divisions to work together than Vivendi and Universal were.

SS+K is independent, but a number of other midsized agencies, such as the Kaplan Thaler Group, have managed to keep their identities and creative reputations intact after a takeover. Thaler, who has helped produce such successful campaigns as the Kodak moments, starting in the late eighties, and the Aflac duck, in 1999, believes that advertising has faltered because it produces "a sea of sameness"; she says that her aim is to "make a brand explode onto the marketplace"—to create what she calls the Big Bang. Her book, written with Robin Koval, her general manager and chief marketing officer, is titled "Bang! Getting Your Message Heard in a Noisy World."

In one sense, Thaler's Big Bang differs little from the idea that has animated advertising since the birth of the first advertising agencies, at the end of the nineteenth century: to create awareness for a product. However, it is much harder to produce a Big Bang when prime-time television can no longer command the mass audiences of forty years ago—and when consumers are distracted by so many sales pitches and have the tools, among them personal video recorders, to bypass TV ads entirely. Randall Rothenberg, who was the advertising columnist for the *Times* in the late eighties, and who wrote one of the best books on the industry, "Where the Suckers Moon: The Life and Death of an Advertising Campaign," says, "The advertising business was built on top of network television. Advertising was a software business. It was all about creating a product and stamping it out over and over again." But a typical American household today has a choice of more than a hundred TV channels, and the broadcast networks—there are now six of them—attract only about thirty per cent of viewers. Today, it would take a hundred and twenty-five CBS, NBC, or ABC ads to reach the percentage of viewers that three network ads once reached. Rothenberg, who is now a director of Booz Allen Hamilton, the consulting firm, also says, "It's easier for Toyota to figure out a new way of producing cars than it is for McCann-Erickson to figure out a new way of persuasion."

Advertising, which subsidizes "free" broadcast television and Internet search engines, still sells goods by manipulating public attitudes about beauty and status. It encourages people to buy all sorts of products, from shampoo to automobiles, for reasons that do not always make sense. (Why do city-dwellers drive Hummers?) Keith Reinhard, who recently stepped down as C.E.O. of DDB Worldwide but remains chairman, wrote the "You deserve a break today" campaign for McDonald's in 1971, a classic of manipulation which *Advertising Age* named the No. 1 jingle of the twentieth century. "The consumer was not looking for a better hamburger," Reinhard explains. "They were looking for a break."

Jim Stengel, the global-marketing officer for Procter & Gamble, speaking at last year's meeting of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, said, "I believe today's marketing model is broken. We're applying antiquated thinking and work systems to



a new world of possibilities." Agencies, he said, needed to produce advertising that consumers "want to stop and watch," but also to collect better information about consumer behavior. Stengel got attention because P. & G. is the world's largest advertiser; last year, it spent $2.9 billion.

Linda Kaplan Thaler, who has several Procter & Gamble accounts, and who also has a good relationship with Stengel, worries most about self-indulgent or risk-averse advertising. "I just think sometimes people are creating messages and talking to themselves," she says. "They're creating art films. There are about three hundred million people out there, and they've got to get it." When last measured by *Advertising Age*, for 2003, the Kaplan Thaler Group was the second-fastest-growing advertising agency in America and No. 1 in New York. (Last week, it took the Revlon account from the midsized company Deutsch, Inc.) In eight years, the agency has expanded to about a hundred and forty employees and more than six hundred million dollars in billings—relatively slight numbers in advertising worldwide but enormous for an agency of its size.

Ad agencies like to proclaim that the cure for what ails them is a jolt of creativity—that's why Omnicom Group's BBDO lured David Lubars from Publicis's Fallon agency, in Minneapolis, to become its new creative head (Lubars oversaw the clever ads for Citibank's identity-protection program). Randall Rothenberg suspects that Thaler's Big Bang notion, and creative campaigns like the Aflac duck, represents not the future but the last gasp of the past. In the future, he says, "there will be hundreds of tools to reach consumers and customers, and a quacking duck will be just one of these. . . . The bulk of marketing spending that we think is being used for advertising is in fact spent on promotion"—in-store displays, public relations, direct mail, trade promotions, stunts aimed at drawing attention. "Is that Aflac duck proof that the old verities work, or that it's the last quack?"

Thaler could be seen as something of a bridge between the Madison Avenue of David Ogilvy and the new multinational order. She is the rare C.E.O. who doubles as creative director. Her corner office on the thirty-fourth floor of One Worldwide Plaza, a block-long building on Eighth Avenue between Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Streets, is her stage. The agency revolves around Thaler. When she is pitching business to a prospective client or being interviewed, she is very much an actress. Eight O'Clock coffee, the name for the old A. & P. brand, is not just a client but a "wonderful" cup of coffee; Herbal Essences shampoo "is really fun to use." Once, when pitching the Panasonic electric-shaver account, she burst into song with a jingle that began, "Shaving sucks!"

Thaler is five feet four. She frets about the hair dryer in her hotel room, about a cold, about the pills she must take. These become communal concerns: *My hair looks awful, doesn't it?* Thaler's office contains a Yamaha PSR 520 synthesizer, on which she composes ad jingles. (She wrote the original Toys "R" Us jingle: "I don't want to grow up. I'm a Toys 'R' Us kid.") Her career has the aura of "Wonderful Town": a young woman comes to Manhattan, gets a big break, and is launched.

Thaler grew up in the Bronx, and once wanted to be a math teacher. (Her father was an electrical engineer who worked for Ideal Toy.) Then, because she played the piano and wrote music and performed in school plays, she wanted to be an actress. (Her mother yearned to be a comedy writer.) At City College, where she aspired to be a clinical psychologist, she was active in the Musical Comedy Society, which she thinks "better prepared me for advertising than anything. You had to write, and you had to perform." By the time she graduated, in 1972, she had decided to become a music teacher, and she went on to get an M.A. in musicology from City College. She joined a touring company of "Stop the World, I Want to Get Off" and performed standup comedy at such clubs as the Improv and Catch a Rising Star.

Laurie Garnier, a close friend and an executive at the Kaplan Thaler Group, remembers that they met when both were twenty-seven; they lived in the same building and went on double dates. During the day, Linda was a music teacher and gave piano lessons. One of her students was Stuart Pittman, who had an ad agency. Pittman asked if she'd like to write jingles for him, and her jingles helped to get her a job as a junior copywriter at J. Walter Thompson. A sign on the door of the firm's C.E.O. for North America, James Patterson, said, "What's the big idea?" Among Thaler's projects at J. Walter Thompson were an ad for French's mustard in which the sandwich gets angry because it is not topped by French's, and the Kodak moments. Patterson, who left advertising and became a best-selling fiction writer, says of Thaler, "She has an ability to find things that stick to the wall."

Thaler stayed at J. Walter Thompson for seventeen years, leaving when Wells, Rich, Greene offered her its top creative job. One client she brought in was Stephen Sadove, who, as president of Worldwide Clairol, oversaw the Herbal Essences account. Three years later, when Procter & Gamble, which owned Pantene shampoo, asked Wells, Rich, Greene to drop Clairol, Thaler decided to leave the company. "I knew that Clairol would at least give me consultant work," she says. She soon decided to start her own firm; the office opened in September, 1997, with one twenty-seven-million-dollar account: Herbal Essences.

The Aflac campaign apparently was born in the tradition of all memorable advertising lines, from "Ring around the collar" to "We'll leave the light on for ya." The American Family Life Assurance Company, a Fortune 500 company, was one of the largest suppliers of supplemental insurance policies (plugging the gaps in traditional insurance policies, usually for life-threatening illnesses or injuries), and had what to a small agency like Thaler's seemed like a robust advertising budget of forty million dollars. (By contrast, a major drug company like AstraZeneca spends hundreds of millions annually to promote a single drug, Nexium.) When Thaler travelled to Columbus, Georgia, to meet with Aflac's C.E.O., Dan Amos, he told her that what he wanted was for people to remember the name.

Thaler's company was competing against another agency and had six weeks to devise a campaign. The creative team of Eric David and Tom Amico, who led the effort, were becoming frustrated. Walking to lunch one day, David silently repeated "Aflac, Aflac." He started to say the word out loud. The more he said it, the more he realized he sounded like a duck. He ran back to the office and stood over Amico's desk and, with a nasal effect, quacked, "*Aflac! Aflac!*" In five minutes, they wrote the first Aflac commercial, featuring two businessmen on a park bench. One mentions the value of supplemental insurance, and the other says, "What's that?"

"*Aflac*," quacks a duck.

Thaler loved it, she said, but when she sent five different mockups to be tested by a focus group the duck came in fifth. And while Thaler trusted her instincts, in advertising, as in Hollywood, every venture is scrutinized by market research. The worldwide firm of Ipsos-ASI administers many of these tests, and a key measurement is the percentage of viewers who remember what they've seen. Gerry Lukeman, the chairman emeritus of the research firm, says that the insurance category "is a tough business for advertising. It arouses anxiety in people, fears. So the average ad-recall measurement is low"—around twelve per cent. The duck did about three times as well.

The Aflac duck, which débuted on December 31, 1999, became an advertising icon, alongside Charlie the Tuna and the California Raisins. In a clever P.R. campaign, the Thaler agency and Aflac came up with toy ducks that quacked. And Thaler and her director of corporate communication, Tricia Kenney, tried to get the actor Ben Affleck to do an ad, but it didn't work out. Thaler said, though, "We planted a seed": Affleck made a joke about the ad—and his name—on the "Tonight Show," telling Jay Leno, "Everywhere I go, no matter what I do, there is always some drunk lady screaming, 'Aflac!' " Thaler said, "When these things happen, it's a very happy surprise for us."

Rob Shepardson, of SS+K, is skeptical of such campaigns, meant to create awareness for a product, and calls the Aflac duck spots "fart advertising." Awareness is only "the first step of success," he says. "I still don't know what Aflac is." He says that the ads don't leave a viewer remembering a single attribute of the company. "My point is that, if you're spending all that money to get awareness, build a relationship," he adds. "There has to be a core idea, like 'What's in it for me?' " But Aflac sales more than doubled in the first four years. "We went from an unknown insurance company in the U.S. to a well-established brand," Dan Amos says. "Now two of the three largest corporations—U.P.S. and Wal-Mart—offer Aflac."

The Aflac campaign was a reminder that network television, even in its dotage, still has considerable power. Last May, fifty-three million viewers watched the final episode of "Friends," and this year's Super Bowl drew eighty-six million viewers. Advertisers certainly realize that there are other means of reaching consumers, and that different media reach different audiences; people between the ages of thirteen and twenty-four, for instance, spend more time on the Internet than they do watching television, according to Mediamark Research, Inc., an audience-measurement firm. A thirty-second ad on a top-rated network program can cost about a half million dollars—and up to two million four hundred thousand dollars for a Super Bowl spot. But, however extravagant such expenditures may seem if measured in terms of cost per viewer, advertisers have not found a better way to create wide awareness of a product.

When Apple's iPod was introduced, in October of 2001, it promised "A thousand songs in your pocket!" According to the advertising-tracking firm of TNS Media Intelligence, Apple spent twenty-four and a half million dollars to launch the device, and forty-five and a half million dollars between January and September of 2004. (By contrast, Roy Bostock says that to reach the same number of consumers as Scope did when it was introduced would cost at least two hundred million dollars in the first year.) Apple's expenditures were relatively modest, and surprisingly traditional: only two hundred and six thousand dollars went for Web ads, and ninety per cent of last year's total went for television, with the broadcast networks receiving twenty-five million dollars and cable just under eighteen million. Yet the real reason that the iPod has more or less cornered the digital music-player market is far simpler: the product was brilliantly conceived and executed. Word-of-mouth and promotion did the rest.

Advertisers are becoming more skillful at using indirect sales pitches, such as product placement—a tactic that probably dates to the birth of cinema. This past October, Ford introduced its redesigned Mustang, which showed up in NBC's drama "American Dreams" and will make numerous appearances throughout 2005, along with ads evoking the Mustang that Steve McQueen drove in the 1968 film "Bullitt." In January, an episode of ABC's hit show "Desperate Housewives" had a scene in which one character agrees to promote a Buick LaCrosse in a shopping mall, giving much the same pitch that viewers saw minutes later in a "real" Buick commercial.

Today, there are product-placement specialists, such as Frank Zazza, the C.E.O. of iTVX, a Westchester-based firm. The studios and television networks employ people to negotiate placement deals. There are no set fees, but the size and demographics of the audience matter; a quick shot of a company's logo in a movie can fetch from ten thousand to ninety thousand dollars. Placements are negotiated individually, with payment going not only to a network or a studio but to the producers who integrate a product into their script. A thirty-second commercial on "Desperate Housewives" would cost up to four hundred thousand dollars, Zazza says, while a product placement on the same show—if it lasted about twenty seconds and was part of a script—could cost advertisers the same amount. Product placement may also consist of giving away cars on "Oprah." Last year, General Motors' Pontiac division gave away two hundred and seventy-six cars on the show. A single thirty-second ad on "Oprah" costs about seventy thousand dollars; Zazza estimates that the publicity value to Pontiac was worth at least seventy million dollars.

This year, Zazza told me, a billion dollars will be spent on product placement in the United States, up from half a billion last year. Next year, he guessed, the figure will double again, coming to represent a fifth of what is spent on all network television advertising. The challenge for agencies is to figure out how to replace the fees they once earned on thirty-second spots. One method is for advertisers to invest aggressively in programs where they have some control over the scripts. On behalf of Sears and Unilever, for instance, MindShare, WPP's media-buying arm, has joined with ABC to develop comedies and dramas and share in the profits.

WE'VE MOVED
VISIT US AT OUR NEW LOCATION:

Broadcasters continue to take steps to accommodate advertisers. ESPN has been experimenting with using a split screen for commercial breaks: ads play on one side while sports action continues, silently, on the other. Network dramas and situation comedies have more sex, more action, more urban appeal. Susan Lyne, the former president of ABC Entertainment, says, "Anything that is complex narrative storytelling—one-hour dramas, narrative miniseries, character-driven movies for television—advertisers don't believe there is an audience under fifty for these kinds of shows."

In many ways, the advertising business in the early twenty-first century would be unrecognizable to the generation that once thrived on Madison Avenue. The traditional assumption, as Keith Reinhard says, was that advertisers chose the time and place of a "one-way show-and-tell" ad. The consumer was a captive audience. Today, advertisers chase consumers with a certain air of desperation. "It's not just about looking pretty anymore," Linda Kaplan Thaler says. "There are all these beautiful products out there. You need a lot more personality to get the date."

Because the audience is increasingly fragmented, advertisers have found other media—from the Internet to "guerrilla marketing" tactics, such as using the foreheads of college students (Dunkin' Donuts paid for that privilege). Ads are increasingly showing up in movie theatres; last year, the Cinema Advertising Council generated three hundred and fifty-six million dollars for theatre owners—thirty-eight per cent more than the year before. Jack Fuller, who, until the end of 2004, oversaw twelve daily newspapers as the president of Tribune Publishing Company, says that his company was among the first to print newspapers zoned by neighborhood. "The answer to fragmentation is, quite simply, to adapt to changing circumstances and compete hard against all comers," he says.

Brett Shevack, a vice-chairman at BBDO New York, embraces "brand initiatives," in which agencies become "business partners with their clients, not just advertising agents to their clients." Ogilvy & Mather's C.E.O., Shelly Lazarus, recounts how her firm spurred Hershey to enter the retail business. When her marketers were looking for a billboard site for the client, they noticed an empty space at Forty-eighth and Broadway. Better than a billboard, they said, would be a Hershey store. The last time she looked, she says, that store was "the highest-grossing-per-square-foot retail space in the country." She adds, "Twenty-five years ago, we would just have done a billboard."

On the Web, consumers can comparison-shop and get reviews—sometimes scathing—from people who have tried a product. Internet advertising fell after the dot-com collapse of 2000, but it jumped twenty-one per cent in 2004, and advertisers now spend more than seven billion dollars on the Web. In the old days, it was often said that half of advertising was wasted but no one knew which half—"spray and pray" is how Yahoo's chief of sales, Wenda Harris Millard, sums up the situation. Millard, who was once the publisher of *Family Circle*, recalls that in 1992 a full-page ad in her magazine sold for a hundred and sixteen thousand dollars. Yet if Bufferin had asked what impact its ad had on sales, Millard says, the magazine wouldn't have had a clue. Today, she says, because consumers leave a digital fingerprint with each click, companies like Yahoo have many clues about buying habits—albeit perhaps not as many as Internet research companies claim.

Today, the technologies that permit advertisers to track consumers also give consumers a way to hide from advertisers. Internet users can block pop-up ads and spam, and can refuse to give out more information than a mailing address and credit-card number. Millard and others have thought about trading free cable or other services for the right to track a consumer's buying habits. For privacy advocates, that would invite Big Brother into the home. Others would say that Big Brother has been there for some time.

When I stopped by Thaler's office one day this fall, she was being visited, as she often is, by prospective clients looking to be noticed in an increasingly crowded media world. "Most clients come to us and want the Aflac duck," Thaler told me. Thaler has considerable charm and enthusiasm, and she talked excitedly about the digital cable box that had just been installed in her apartment, capable of performing remarkable feats: allowing her to record programs, fast-forward and rewind, and skip the commercials (this she did not mention). Despite her professed optimism about the business—if advertising didn't work, she said, "the generic brands of every category would be selling out"—she knows that her agency must become less reliant on traditional advertising. (Similarly, talent agencies in Los Angeles are becoming less reliant on the movie industry by taking advertising accounts away from the agencies.) Thaler wants to produce more entertainment programs, as she did several years ago for CBS with a variety show for a client, the American Red Cross. "I put on my business cards 'advertising and entertainment,' " she said. "I'm interested in entertainment." In January, she opened a new division, KTG Buzz, to expand her agency's public relations and promotional abilities. "Advertising is in trouble only if you think of the narrow box advertising has traditionally been in, which is getting on TV or in print," she said.

Thaler believes that personal publicity helps build an aura of success. To promote herself and her agency, she agreed to host a gentler version of Donald Trump's "The Apprentice" for Oxygen, called "Making It Big," to début in May. She said that it would be great publicity for the agency—"like doing a new business pitch." Thaler's impulse is shared by, among others, Donny Deutsch, of Deutsch, Inc., who is the host of a daily interview show on CNBC called "The Big Idea." In an age of megacorporations with names like Omnicom, the business may have become smaller and less glamorous, but it is still about persuasion: people thinking up new ways to sell—themselves, the wares of their clients, or both. ♦

RARE DALI PRINTS
If you own, or are considering the purchase of a Salvador Dali print....
Our exclusive catalog, "Salvador Dali: A Retrospective of Master Prints," features full color images of more than 500 signed limited edition Salvador Dali prints. Each print displayed in the catalog has been fully documented in the book, **"The Official Catalog of the Graphic Works of Salvador Dali," by Albert Field** and is guaranteed authentic. Our catalog, "Salvador Dali: A Retrospective of Master Prints," is a must for anyone interested in works signed by Dali. Call now and we will rush a free copy of "The Salvador Dali Collectors Quarterly," (regularly $15.00 per issue).
SALVADOR DALI
A RETROSPECTIVE OF MASTER PRINTS
1-800-275-3254
ask for Dept N.Y.
http://www.daligallery.com • FAX 949-373-2446
Brana Fine Art
31103 Rancho Viejo Rd., #2-193, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

WOMEN'S PROJECT • Julia Miles Theater 424 W. 55th St.
INKY
a new play by RINNE GROFF directed by LORETTA GRECO
Telecharge 212.239.6200 • telecharge.com • march 2nd-april 3rd

French & Italian Holiday Rentals
Live like a European in your own chateau, villa or farmhouse. Weekly rentals. Most regions.
Call (510)559-8080 or write
2124 Kittredge St, #200, Berkeley, CA 94704
www.villeetvillage.com
VILLE ET VILLAGE®

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK NOW
Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, religious, etc. New authors welcomed. For free 32-page illustrated guidebook **TD-70, call 1-800-821-3990 or write to: Vantage Press, 419 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016**

Galápagos
The Best Active Natural History Vacations
Free Catalog 800-368-2794
www.wildernesstravel.com/ny

ACTIVE VACATIONS
BACKROADS
AWARD-WINNING, FIVE-STAR ADVENTURE
BIKING · HIKING · MULTISPORT
for a free catalog call 800-GO-ACTIVE
or visit **www.backroads.com/tny**

CELEBRATION BOWL
Weddings - Anniversaries
Send someone you love a personalized crystal masterpiece.
Special Inscriptions? Yes.
Rush delivery available.
8.5" - $139 12" - $249
831-427-3512
www.celebrationbowl.com

SUPREME CONFIDENCE

The jurisprudence of Justice Antonin Scalia.

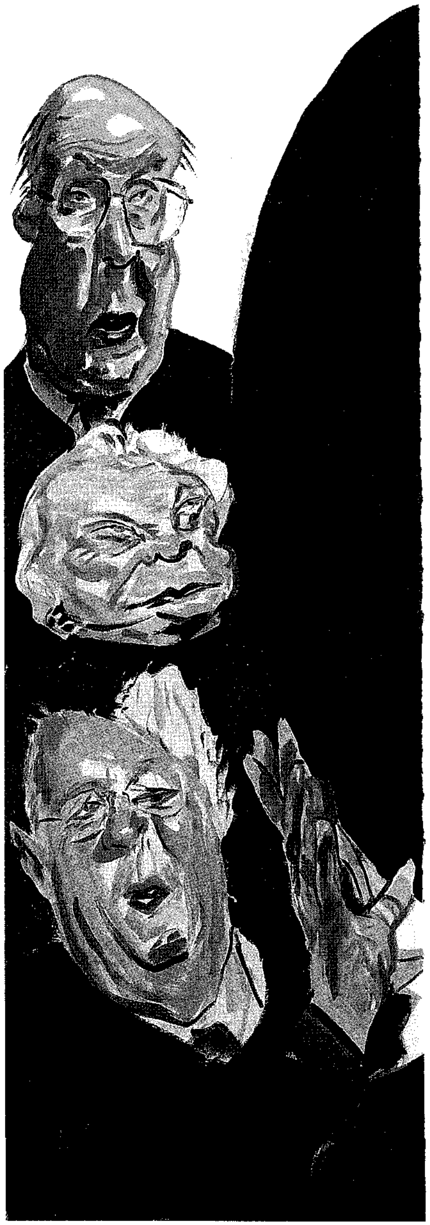
BY MARGARET TALBOT

Lining up to hear a Supreme Court Justice speak is more like lining up for a rock concert than you might think. This is especially true if the speech is on a college campus and the speaker in question is Justice Antonin Scalia. Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a favorite on the feminist lecture circuit; Clarence Thomas has vivid stories of growing up as a "nappy-headed little boy running barefoot" around Pinpoint, Georgia; Sandra Day O'Connor is the preferred Justice at awards luncheons where crystal figurines are handed out. But Scalia is the most likely to offer the jurisprudential equivalent of smashing a guitar onstage. He might present a scorching opinion that will get him in trouble back in the Court—as he did in January, 2003, when he lambasted judicial efforts to eliminate the phrase "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. (Later that year, the Court agreed to take on the issue, and Scalia had to recuse himself.) Or he might stun a pompous liberal with a bearish verbal swat; recently, when a questioner criticized Scalia's judicial approach by invoking Alexander Hamilton, Scalia retorted, "Hamilton, sir, was *writing* the Constitution, not interpreting one." He will be funnier, more sarcastic, and more explicit about his beliefs than most people expect a Supreme Court Justice to be. And curiosity about him—what he will say or do next—has only grown now that there is talk that he could become Chief Justice, replacing William Rehnquist, who is suffering from thyroid cancer. President Bush has said that, of the current Justices, he admires Scalia and Thomas the most, and Scalia, who is sixty-nine, is recognized, even by his ideological opponents, as the singular conservative mind of the Rehnquist Court.

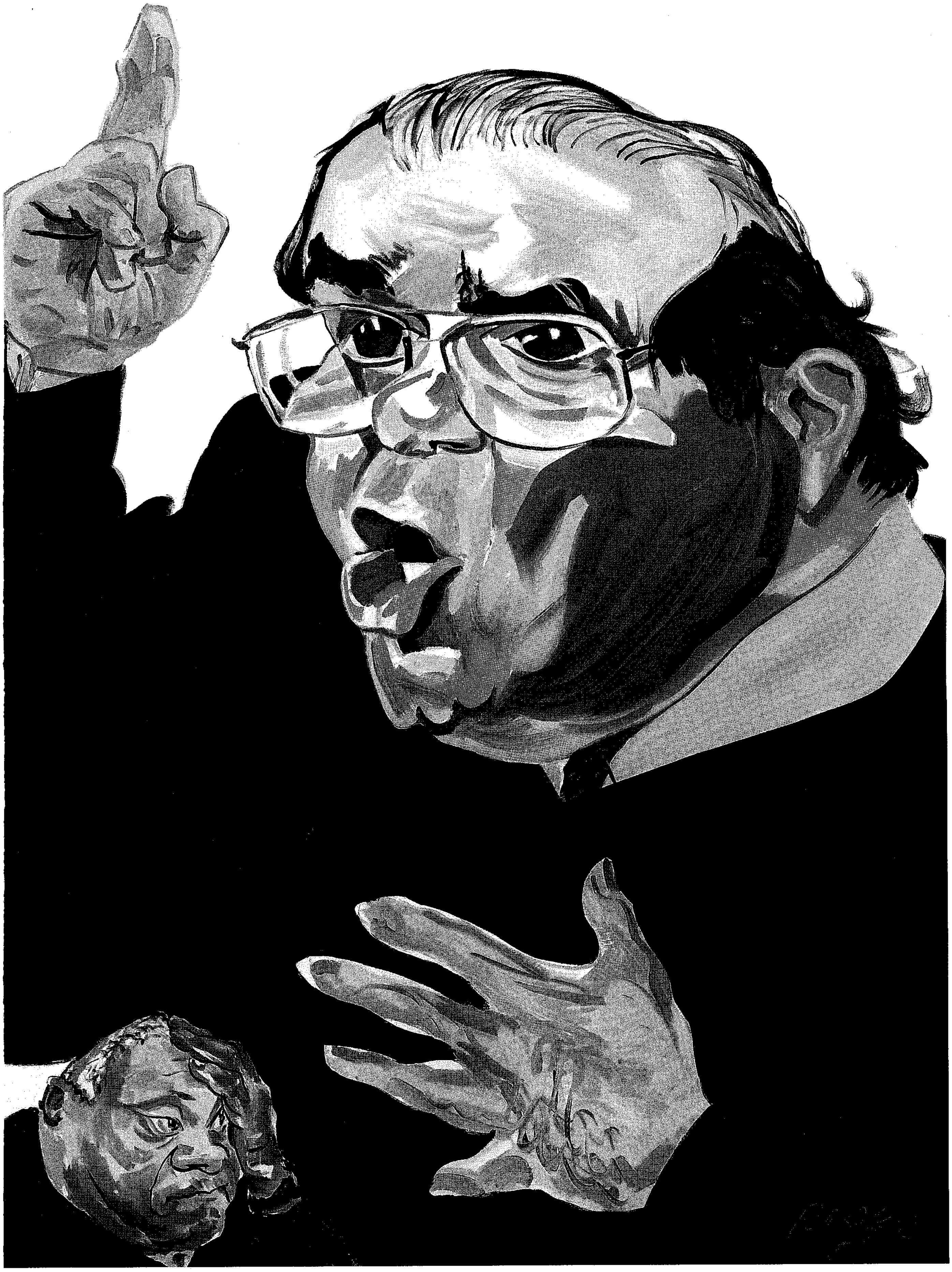
On a damp, cold afternoon in November, Scalia spoke at the University of Michigan Law School. Two hours before the lecture, the line extended down the steps of the school's auditorium. Many in the crowd were liberal students—this was Ann Arbor, after all—who were nursing a grudge over Scalia's snappish minority opinion in Grutter v. Bollinger, a 2003 case in which the Court upheld an affirmative-action program at Michigan Law School. The school had argued, and the majority had agreed, that having a "critical mass" of minority students offered an "educational benefit"—an improvement in "cross-racial understanding." But Michigan's "mystical 'critical mass' justification for its discrimination by race challenges even the most gullible mind," Scalia wrote in his dissenting opinion. "The admissions statistics show it to be a sham to cover a scheme of racially proportionate admissions." Moreover, he went on:

> This is not, of course, an "educational benefit" on which students will be graded on their Law School transcript (Works and Plays Well with Others: B+) or tested by bar examiners (Q: Describe in five hundred words or less your cross-racial understanding). For it is a lesson of life rather than law—essentially the same lesson taught to (or rather learned by, for it cannot be "taught" in the usual sense) people three feet shorter and twenty years younger than the full-grown adults at the University of Michigan Law School, in institutions ranging from Boy Scout troops to public-school kindergartens.

Outside the auditorium, a dozen or so students marched in a ragged oval, chanting, "Two, four, six, eight, separation of church and state!"—not the most original of slogans but one that they thought appropriate for a Justice who so often stresses the deep and redeeming religiosity of the American people. One student had drawn a poster of Scalia as Oscar the Grouch. Such mockery does not seem to bother Scalia; his certainty runs so deep that he views detractors with mild amusement. And he revels in intellectual combat. Every year, he hires at least one liberal clerk, to give him somebody to spar with. Sister Helen Prejean, the anti-death-penalty crusader, recalls in her recent book, "The



Scalia's certainty runs so deep that he views detractors with mild amusement.



PHILIP BURKE

Death of Innocents," that she once approached Scalia in the New Orleans airport to say that she was planning to attack his views in print. "I'll be coming right back at you," he said, jabbing his fist in the air.

At 4:30 P.M., Scalia strode heavily to the lectern, his head thrust forward. He has a square, ruddy face; thick black hair with a patent-leather sheen; gold-rimmed glasses; and an almost daunting air of vigor. He began by explaining that, as a jurist, he is an "originalist"—or, as he put it, in his habitual tone of pugnacious beleaguerment, one of "a small hearty minority who believe in a philosophy called originalism." This cohort was so small, he said, that you could "fire a cannon loaded with grapeshot in the faculty of any major law school"—an experiment that Scalia might enjoy trying—"and not hit an originalist."

Originalists, he went on, feel that judges should adhere to the precise words of the Constitution, and believe that the meaning of those words was locked into place at the time they were written. Scalia likes to say that a Constitution is about "rigidifying things," whereas elections introduce flexibility into the system. Although proponents of originalism claim that it is a politically neutral method, in Scalia's hands it usually leads to conservative results—at least on social issues like abortion, capital punishment, and gay rights.

The philosophy that an originalist sets himself against most firmly is that of the Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, who, in 1985, argued that "the genius of the Constitution rests not in any static meaning it might have had in a world that is dead and gone, but in the adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems." Scalia sees this approach as an expression of judicial arrogance that all too often leads to the "discovery" of bogus new rights—such as the "right to privacy" that undergirds two decisions that Scalia loathes, Roe v. Wade (1973) and Lawrence v. Texas (2003), which declared unconstitutional a law forbidding homosexual sodomy. In his speech, Scalia noted derisively that, in a recent case, his fellow-Justices had opted to leave open the question of whether there is a "right to die." Adopting the orotund voice of a newsreel announcer, he joked, "Stay tuned! In the fullness of time, a beneficent Court will give the people this new right."

Scalia said, "People ask me, 'When did you first become an *originalist*?,' like they're saying, 'When did you first start eating human flesh?' " But originalism used to be orthodoxy, he said. Only in recent times, he added, have judges become enamored of an approach based on—"Oh, how I hate the phrase!"—a "living Constitution." Scalia uttered these last words with exaggerated disdain, as if he were holding up some particularly noxious leftovers extracted from the back of the fridge.

Originalism wasn't quite as unchallenged a doctrine as Scalia claims—even before the "living Constitution" approach emerged. In fact, arguments about the proper sources for judicial interpretation go back to the earliest days of the Supreme Court. In a 1793 case, one Justice suggested that American judges take into account both "general jurisprudence" and the "laws and practice" of other "States and Kingdoms," while another Justice favored basing decisions exclusively on the words of the Constitution. Hugo Black, a liberal who served on the Court from 1937 to 1971, advocated a literal reading of the Constitution—setting himself against colleagues who, in his view, interpreted its words too wishfully. (Black famously objected to busing because he couldn't find the word "bus" in the Constitution.) Black did not found a school of thought, however. As a named doctrine, originalism didn't fully emerge until the nineteen-seventies, with the work of Robert Bork, then a Yale law professor, who wrote, "There is no other sense in which the Constitution can be what article VI proclaims it to be: 'Law.' This means, of course, that a judge, no matter on what court he sits, may never create new constitutional rights or destroy old ones."

A "living Constitution" approach, Scalia said, gives a judge far too much interpretive latitude. When the method is applied, for example, to the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual" punishment, judges must consider "the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." This line comes from a 1958 decision, Trop v. Dulles, which declared that stripping a deserter of his citizenship was unconstitutional; the Court has since cited the phrase in a 2002 decision barring the execution of the mentally retarded and in a decision this term banning the death penalty for juveniles. Scalia recited the words in the honeyed singsong voice of a well-indoctrinated child, then offered this mocking gloss: "Every day in every way we're getting *better* and *better*. Societies only mature." He paused. "They never *rot*."

Jolly and gregarious though he is, Scalia does not have a sanguine view of human nature or much confidence in social progress. A few years ago, in the Catholic journal *First Things*, he wrote that capital punishment is easier for American Christians to abide than for secular Europeans, because Christians tend to "regard punishment in general as deserved" and consider death "no big deal." His writings are salted with allusions to sin and human fallibility. Scalia despises utopian thinking. Inequality and unfairness can't always be fixed, he believes; the best you can do in a democracy is try, through the parry and thrust of electoral politics, to bring the majority around to your point of view.

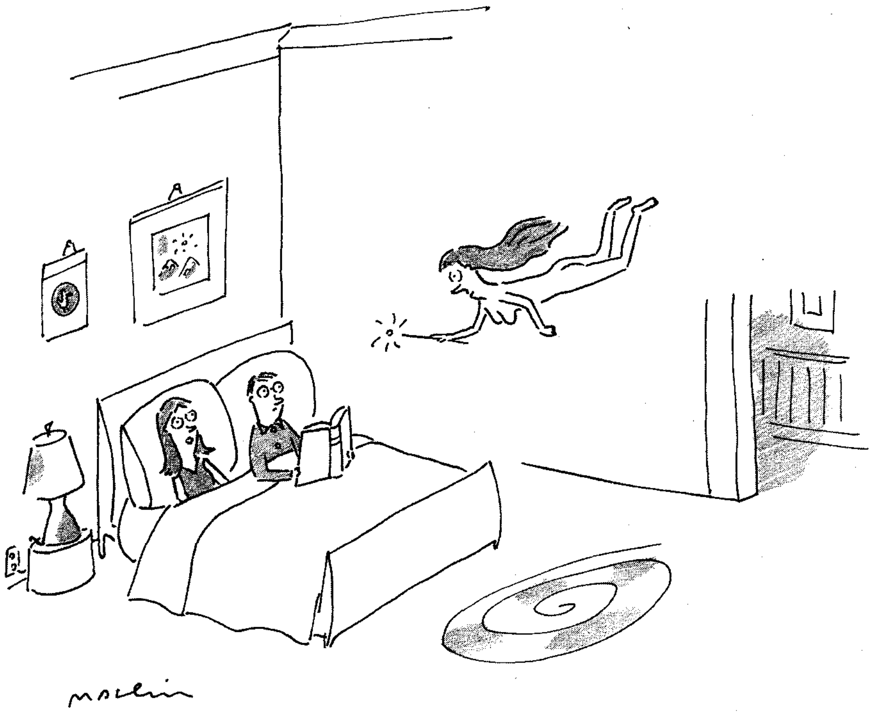
As he spoke, Scalia often sounded exasperated but not weary—his cadences are marked by can-you-believe-this-stuff exclamation points. "You think there's a right to suicide? Do it the way the people of Oregon did it and pass a law! Don't come to the Supreme Court!"; "In 1791, the death penalty was a punishment for a felony. It was the *only* punishment for a felony! It was the *definition* of a felony! . . . It was legal for two hundred years and nobody thought it was unconstitutional!"

Scalia has a narrow view of what judges ought to be trusted to do; since he fervently insists on these limitations, the effect is one of bellicose humility. "If the Constitution is an empty bottle into which we pour whatever values—the evolving standards of decency of a maturing society—why in the world would you let it be filled by judges? *I* don't know what the standards of decency are out there. I'm afraid to inquire!" Scalia got a big laugh. "Why you would want to leave these enormously important social questions to nine lawyers with no constraints, I cannot fathom."

Scalia tends to lampoon his enemies. A " 'living-Constitution' judge," he explained, is a "happy fellow who comes home at night to his wife and says, 'The Constitution means exactly what I think it ought to mean!' " By contrast, Scalia said, he was sometimes forced by the rigors of originalist methodology to make decisions that lead to consequences he finds repugnant. He noted that in 1989 he voted to strike down the conviction of a man who had burned the American flag, on the ground that the First Amendment protected such symbolic acts. "Scalia did not *like* to vote that way," he said, slipping into the third person, as he often does during comic riffs. "He does not like sandal-wearing bearded weirdos who go around burning flags. He is a *very* conservative fellow." Although originalists are not supposed to care about the outcome, an originalist's wife, evidently, might sometimes consider this a crock. Scalia went on, "I came down to breakfast the next morning, and my wife—she's a very conservative woman—she was scrambling eggs and humming 'It's a Grand Old Flag.' That's a true story. I don't need that! A living-Constitution judge never has to suffer that way."

After his talk, Scalia jousted with a long line of questioners. A young man brought up affirmative action: Scalia went to an élite law school; wasn't it important for minorities to have a similar experience? "I didn't go to an élite law school because I was an Italian-American," Scalia replied. "I met the intellectual standards." It was wrong to assume, he said, that "it helps minorities to go to an élite law school. It harms people to push them into an environment that's too fast for them. You simply assume it's going to do them good, because it makes *you* feel good."

Another audience member asked, "There are those who think the 2000 election was stolen. Could you explain why that's wrong?" Scalia growled, "I am inclined to say, four years and another election later, 'Get over it!' " He waited for the boos and the applause to die down. "The only issue was whether we should put an end to it, after three weeks of looking like a fool in the eyes of the world," he said. Besides, he asked, how could the Court have declined to hear the case? "On what grounds?" he asked. "That it's not important enough for us to trouble ourselves with?" The prestige of the Court is "not something you put up on the mantel and admire," he said with pride. "It's there for use in battle."


"Owen, look—the good sex fairy."

• •

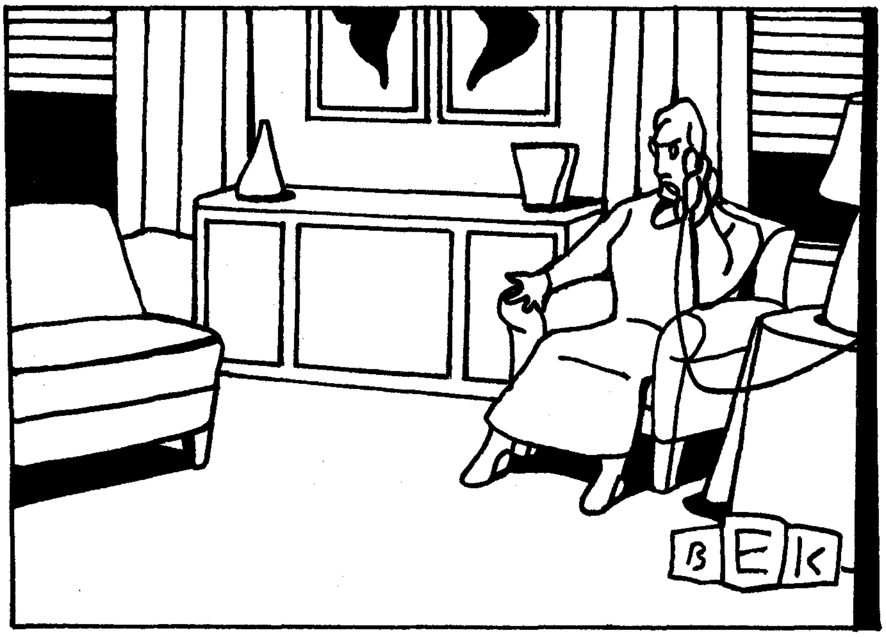
Scalia was born in 1936 in Trenton, New Jersey, and was reared, first in Trenton and then in Elmhurst, Queens, in a household that was Catholic, patriotic, and intellectual. Scalia's father, Eugene Scalia, immigrated from Sicily as a teenager. He earned a Ph.D. at Columbia and became a literary translator and a professor of Romance languages at Brooklyn College. Scalia's mother, Catherine Panaro Scalia, the daughter of Italian immigrants, was an elementary-school teacher. Antonin was their only child.

Last May, at a speech before the National Italian American Federation, in Boston, Justice Scalia said, "My father was a much more scholarly and intellectual person than I am. He always had a book in front of his face." Professor Scalia was a stickler for grammar who reminded his son "to use the subjunctive" when he wrote his opinions for the United States Court of Appeals for the Washington, D.C., circuit. (Both of Scalia's parents died about six months before he was nominated to the Supreme Court, in 1986.) "Even on his deathbed, he was still reciting 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,' " Eugene Scalia's sister-in-law told the Washington *Post.* In his Boston speech, Scalia recalled his father teaching him that "all Americans would love their country more if they had lived abroad for a while."

Despite his own devotion to scholarship, Eugene Scalia told his son that neither education nor intellect was the most important thing in life. "Brains are like muscles—you can hire them by the hour," he would say. "The only thing that's not for sale is character." During his speech to the Italian American Federation, Scalia, who has nine children, said that one thing he "regretted about his own success" was that his children hadn't had the experience of "having relatives who were not great minds." He recalled a Sicilian-born uncle who had pressed clothes for a living; he was "a decent, lovely man, the salt of the earth," who taught him that "you don't have to be successful, you don't have to have a lot of money to be good." In speeches, Scalia urges fellow-Catholics to "have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity," as he told a meeting of the Knights of Columbus in January. That meeting was at a Holiday Inn in Baton Rouge (an unusual venue for a Justice). "Be fools for Christ," he told the crowd. "Have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world." Scalia considers himself an interloper in the sophisticated world—a blunt-spoken, rules-are-rules jurist and traditional Catholic in a secular world made wobbly by moral relativism.

In a 1990 *Yale Law Journal* article, "The Constitutional Catechism of Antonin Scalia," George Kannar, a scholar at the University of Buffalo law school, argues that Scalia's Catholic upbringing and his exposure to his father's exegetical passions profoundly influenced his approach to jurisprudence. When judging a case, Justice Scalia will consult a dictionary if necessary to find out what a statute means, but he does not consider the legislative history of the statute, and he makes no attempt to divine the intent of the legislators. This rigorous formalism, and his emphasis on finding the plain meaning of the text, is a habit of mind, Kannar writes, that runs "deeper than his specifically political convictions." Scalia's originalist method echoes the scholarly sensibility of his father, which was in the spirit of the New Criticism, a school of interpretation that disparaged readings informed by the writer's biography or a text's historical background. (As the elder Scalia once put it, "A poem is a poem, *not* this-plus-that.") Scalia's mind also reflects his Catholic education, which emphasized learning the catechism by rote and accepting its rules as absolutes. In a 1972 essay, Garry Wills wrote that growing up Catholic before the reforms of Vatican II meant growing up in "a world of quaint legalisms," where "to know the terms was to know the thing, to solve the problem." As Kannar puts it, the Church promoted "a particular literalistic view of what one does with texts." Scalia ultimately developed into a jurist who does not show literal fealty to what the Church says—he rejects the Pope's teachings against the death penalty, for instance—but he certainly pays close attention to the text of statutes and the Constitution.

As a teen-ager, Scalia attended Manhattan's Xavier High School, a Jesuit military academy on Sixteenth Street that had been educating the sons of Irish and Italian immigrants since the mid-nineteenth century. (The school no longer has a military focus.) Scalia was on the rifle team, and he rode the subway from Queens carrying a .22 carbine. One of his school friends, Thomas Campion, now a lawyer in New Jersey, remembers that the Xavier boys wore uniforms—"a brown khaki jacket with brown pants four days a week and then, on Friday, a blue uniform." He recalls, "We marched in lots of parades. Once a week, we'd do a drill at an armory on Fourteenth Street." Scalia was an excellent student, a debate champion, and an enthusiastic actor. (He played the lead in "Macbeth" and the angel Gabriel in "The Green Pastures," which a school publication described as "a humorous characterization of the Negro interpretation of the Bible." Another student was "De Lawd.") He played the French horn in the marching band, and was, as the school newspaper put it, "no stranger to the bright world of television," having been "a panel member of the popular Sunday show 'Mind Your Manners,' where he displayed to the best his fine traits of character." The paper continued, "His keen, sensible answers, well seasoned with a bit of humor, stole the show again and again."



"What about me? Am I not a natural disaster?"

The Xavier boys were taught primarily by Jesuit clergymen who offered what Campion calls "a very, very classical education." He says, "We had four years of Latin, Caesar to Cicero to Virgil and the poets. And then three years of Greek—Homer, more Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides." Campion recalls that he and Scalia had an English teacher, a priest named Vincent Taylor, who was a big influence on them both. "He made us read, read, read, even had us read Graham Greene—'The Power and the Glory' and 'The End of the Affair.' " Another teacher, Father Matthews, told a brash student who offered his own criticism of "Hamlet," "Mister, when I teach Shakespeare, *he's* not on trial: you are!" Matthews's remark stuck with Scalia, as a way of thinking about the law.

Scalia, who is known to friends as Nino, continued his Catholic education at Georgetown University. He joined the debate team, the Virgil Academy, and the drama club. To this day, he exercises his theatrical side, entertaining guests at parties by singing and playing the piano—most recently, he sang "God Bless America" for a hundred guests at a birthday party in Bethesda, Maryland, for the Republican lawyer and former prosecutor Joseph DiGenova. Scalia is such an opera fan that he took a part as an extra in a 1994 Washington Opera production of Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos." While he was at Georgetown, he also discovered A.V. Ristorante, a dim, wood-panelled Italian place—it's still on New York Avenue, still serves garlicky pizzas and pastas, looking fundamentally unchanged since the fifties, and Scalia still goes there.

Scalia graduated in 1957, first in his class. He delivered a rather purple valedictorian's address that contained hints of the hyperbolic and resounding style that marks his Court opinions. "Our days were spent in hunting; but our prey was more elusive and more valuable than any forest deer or mountain bear or prairie buffalo," he said. "For we were seekers of the truth. Truth has no bones, no flesh, no solid earthy form. You cannot hear her creeping through the forest glades by night; you cannot see her running through the forest paths by day; you cannot watch your arrow speeding straight to thud into her heart. For those who seek her, she is everywhere; for those who do not love her, she is nowhere." If he and his fellow-graduates—the future "leaders of a real, a true, a Catholic intellectual life"—allowed "the cares of wealth or fame or specialized career to stifle our spirit of wonder, to turn us from the hunt, to kill in us what was most human, then we shall have betrayed ourselves, our society, our race."

For Scalia, who had made his greatest mark as a ferocious debater, Harvard Law School was a logical next step. Scalia's law-school classmate Daniel Mayers, a corporate lawyer in Washington, recalls that Scalia seemed conservative—but not in a way that made him stand out. "We were a very traditionalist group of people," he said. "Many of us had done two years of military service before going to graduate school." Another friend, Frank Michelman, now a professor at Harvard Law School, remembers that his peers were "very much anchored in the fifties" and that they shared "the attitude that there was truth, and method, and enlightenment to be gathered from this educational experience." Michelman and Scalia both became editors of the law review. They wore ties to class and edited articles late into the night. Scalia used to bring cannoli from a Cambridge bakery to the office, and eat them hunched over his desk.

Mayers recalls that in 1959 he and his classmates attended a lecture given at Harvard by the Columbia professor Herbert Wechsler, who argued that judges could avoid turning the Supreme Court into a "naked power organ" by conducting a "sustained, disinterested, merciless examination" of litigants' arguments. "We all were very struck by this argument that there were neutral principles of law which, if you really disciplined yourself, you could apply without regard to your own political preferences," Mayers said. In the end, he said, Scalia was the only one of the law-review crowd—at that time the top twenty-five students in the class—who became a political conservative. Mayers recalls "conversations with him—not intellectual conversations, more like what you'd talk about drinking beer at night—where it was clear that he believed there were more important things in life than to go out and struggle on behalf of the poor, and that God or somebody had ordained there were inevitably going to be a lot of poor people in the world, and there wasn't much to do about it."

After graduating from Harvard, Scalia visited Europe on a fellowship and then returned to join a white-shoe corporate law firm in Cleveland: Jones, Day, Cockley & Reavis. By then, he was married to the former Maureen McCarthy, a Radcliffe English major and an Irish-American doctor's daughter, whom he had met in Cambridge. (Maureen, a strict Catholic, is not particularly interested in the law; she has done volunteer work at an anti-abortion counselling center, and also at churches and hospitals.) His colleagues considered Scalia brash, energetic, and voluble. At a party, he argued against eight of them at once, defending a law-review note that he had edited supporting blue laws—statutes banning alcohol sales and other worldly pleasures on Sundays. "He has those bushy eyebrows that furrow up when he's concentrating, and for forty-five minutes on end he had that furrowed look," James Lynn, then a partner at Jones, Day, told the *Legal Times* in 1985. "It never bothered him that everyone was on the other side."

In 1967, Scalia joined the faculty at the University of Virginia law school. Four years later, he took a legal job in the Nixon Administration, and, in 1974, Nixon nominated him to oversee the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. By the time he started the job, Nixon had resigned. On Scalia's first day, he was given the task of deciding who owned Nixon's tapes and papers—the American public or Nixon. Scalia drafted a memo supporting Nixon. "To conclude that such materials are not the property of former President Nixon would be to reverse what has apparently been the almost unvaried understanding of all three branches of the government since the beginning of the republic," he wrote. Congress rejected Scalia's argument—it seemed likely that, given the chance, Nixon would destroy vital materials—and enacted the Presidential Records and Materials Preservation Act. Scalia later defended his position before a Senate subcommittee, invoking an analogy both homely and extreme: "Anyone saying a few kind words about executive privilege after the events of the last few years is in a position somewhat akin to the man preaching the virtues of water after the Johnstown flood, or the utility of fire after the burning of Chicago. But fire and water are, for all that, essential elements of human existence. And executive privilege is indispensable to the functioning of our system of checks and balances."

Scalia continued to move between government and the academy, teaching at the University of Chicago, Stanford, and Georgetown. In the nineteen-eighties, while at Chicago, Scalia contributed to *Regulation*, a magazine then published by the conservative American Enterprise Institute. He wrote jaunty attacks on government regulation, with titles like "Guadalajara! A Case Study in Regulation by Munificence"; in one article, he described the Freedom of Information Act as "the Taj Mahal of the Doctrine of Unanticipated Consequences, the Sistine Chapel of Cost-Benefit Analysis Ignored."

Such polemics attracted the attention of the Reagan Administration, which was attempting to recast the judiciary branch in its image and was picking the universities clean of young, conservative legal academics. Reagan cared intensely about the judiciary—he liked to tell stories from his governorship about judges who were too easy on criminals and too hard on business owners—but the young conservatives around him cared even more. In their view, the prime enemy was the Supreme Court under the leadership of Earl Warren, which, its critics believed, had flouted judicial restraint in the service of an egalitarian agenda. For the Warren Court, and the liberals who embraced its decisions advancing the rights of criminal defendants, dismantling segregation, and protecting minorities, "judicial restraint" was hardly a gleaming principle. Warren, upon his retirement, in 1969, claimed that judicial restraint meant "that for a long, long time we had been sweeping under the rug a great many problems basic to American life."

Warren was interested less in legal niceties than in getting to a just result, and his opinions frequently invoked a basic, even intuitive, sense of fairness. In 1954, he presented Brown v. Board of Education to his colleagues in the most fundamental terms: either they believed in the inherent inferiority of blacks or they did not, for segregation could be upheld only if they did. "Opposition based on the hemstitching and embroidery of the law appeared petty in terms of Warren's basic-values approach," Justice Abe Fortas told the historian Bernard Schwartz, and the result was "the most profound and pervasive revolution ever achieved by substantially peaceful means." The Warren Court not only laid the groundwork for the civil-rights movement with its desegregation rulings; it also expanded the rights of the accused, ratifying, for example, the Miranda warnings and the right of indigents to counsel. And in Griswold v. Connecticut, a 1965 case involving contraceptives, the Court recognized a right to privacy for the first time.

When Nixon appointed Warren Burger Chief Justice in 1969, conservatives hoped for a reversal of the Warren Court's trajectory. In the event, the Burger Court continued many of the trends that the Warren Court had inaugurated. William Rehnquist, whom Nixon appointed in 1971, firmly opposed judicial decisions that, he said, "make an end run around popular government," and he became the Court's sole dissenting voice so often that he earned the nickname the Lone Ranger. Indeed, in 1973 the Burger Court made the ultimate activist decision: Roe v. Wade. Even liberals like Ruth Bader Ginsburg have criticized Roe for prematurely foreclosing a matter that could have been left to the legislatures. And, as far as the Christian right was concerned, Roe turned the federal judiciary into a wicked phalanx of activist judges bent on thwarting the popular will. By the nineteen-eighties, conservatives were galvanized against the Court. Bork was issuing influential critiques of the Court's "countermajoritarian," even tyrannical, power. In 1985, Edwin Meese, Reagan's Attorney General, gave a speech urging the Court to adopt a "jurisprudence of original intent."

Around this time, the Reagan Administration began "breeding" Supreme Court Justices—placing possible candidates on the courts of appeal to test them for philosophical consistency. Reagan appointed Bork, Scalia, and Richard Posner, another intellectual writer-jurist, to federal judgeships. Posner, who revealed a libertarian streak on privacy issues, soon fell out of the running. Scalia fared better. The scholar David Yalof, in his book "Pursuit of Justices," observes that a "thorough search of Scalia's record uncovered not a *single opinion* in which either the result or the ground of decision seemed problematic from a conservative point of view."

In 1986, Burger retired, and Reagan named Rehnquist Chief Justice. There was now a vacancy on the Court. Who would be nominated first, Bork or Scalia? A working group set up by the Administration identified Scalia as "especially creative and successful in transforming the common intuition that 'courts are running the country' into a set of coherent principles about what courts should not do." Moreover, Scalia was, at fifty, nine years younger than Bork; he was far more charming; and he was Italian-American. Scalia got the nomination, and sailed through his confirmation hearings unopposed.

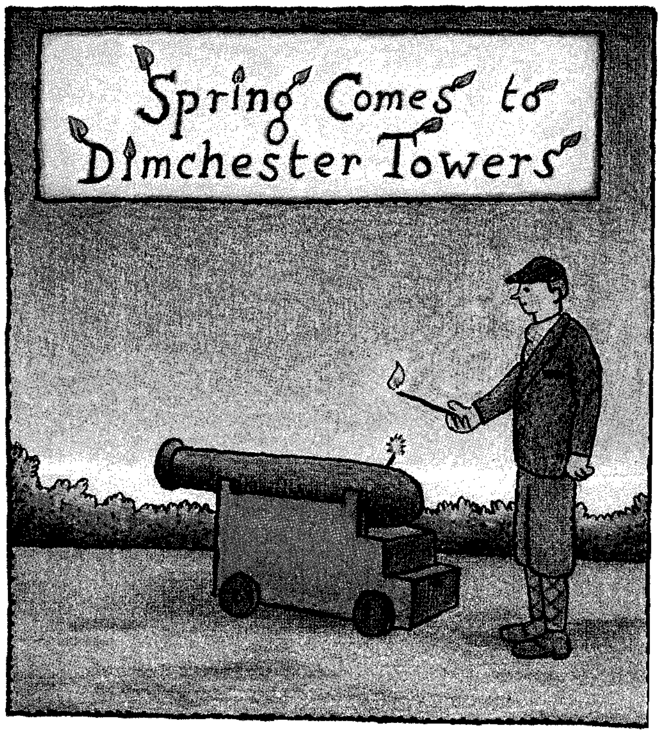
When Scalia took his place on the Court, the word was that he would be a consensus-builder. Daniel Mayers, the Harvard classmate, remembers telling people at the time, "If you're worried about his political persuasion, you should *really* worry because he has such a wonderful personality—so jovial, full of good fellowship, no rough edges—that he will be very persuasive and build a following on the Court."

It didn't work out that way. Scalia's opinions have certainly won him adulation from the right—there are Web sites called Ninomania and The Cult of Scalia, and Regnery Press recently published a collection of his opinions called "Scalia Dissents: Writings of the Supreme Court's Wittiest, Most Outspoken Justice." Yet, especially on critical matters such as abortion, his arguments have not won over the swing voters on the Court, Justice O'Connor in particular. In a new book, the legal scholar Mark Tushnet argues that the key split on the Rehnquist Court is between two types of Republicans: the moderates, exemplified by O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy, and the post-Reagan-revolution types (Scalia, Thomas, and Rehnquist), with the liberals (Stevens, Breyer, Ginsburg, and Souter) "happy to pick up the victories they could gain when the Court's Republicans divided." In the end, "the Court's divisions meant that conservatives prevailed—more or less—on issues associated with the Republican Party's efforts to scale down the size of government, while losing rather consistently on the social issues—abortion, gay rights, and affirmative action—that animated an important part of the party's base."

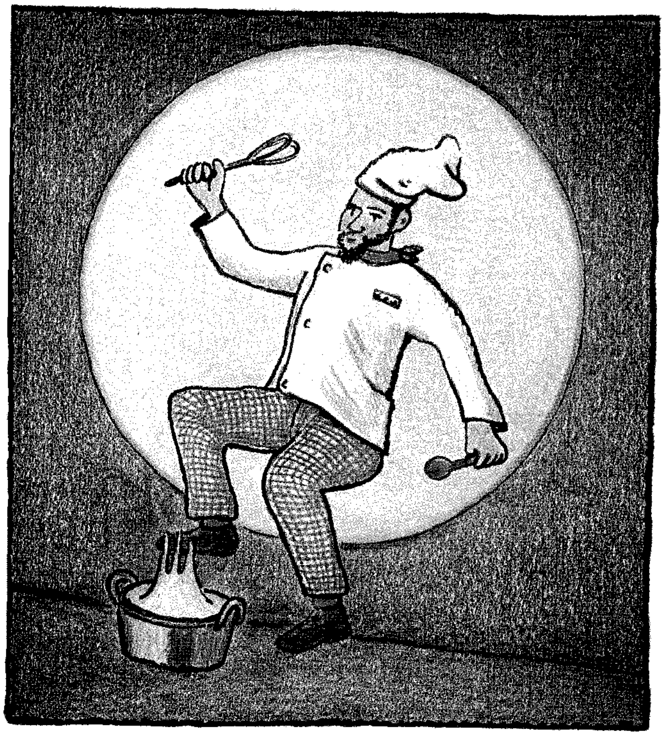
Over the years, Scalia has become an increasingly frustrated and unheeded voice. For those who helped to pick him for the Court, his failure to persuade his brethren has been a big disappointment. Douglas Kmiec, a former Reagan Administration official who worked on judicial appointments, says, "Sometimes one wishes that Justice Scalia's computer came with a delayed 'Send' button, so he could read some of his footnotes the next morning and see if they were worth the carnage." His champions did not take into account that charm does not make a consensus-builder out of a person who doesn't particularly value consensus. Scalia disparages compromises and balancing tests and incremental, one-time-only solutions of the kind that Sandra Day O'Connor, for instance, is famous for.

Scalia's interactions with lawyers are notoriously aggressive. He told one lawyer who was frantically riffling through papers in search of an answer to a question, "When you find it, say 'Bingo.' " During arguments for Bush v. Gore, when a lawyer kept calling Justices by the wrong names—referring to Souter as "Justice Breyer" and to Stevens as "Justice Brennan"—Scalia growled an unprompted "I'm Scalia!" He bluntly dismisses arguments he doesn't like. "Your principal position asks us to play games with the word 'facts,' " he chided a lawyer this term. In November, the Court considered whether someone who had been convicted of a crime in another country could own a gun here. The lawyer arguing against a ban invoked the spectre of a political prisoner—Alexander Solzhenitsyn, perhaps—being victimized by such a policy. Scalia shot back, "Which would you prefer—that Solzhenitsyn not be able to have a gun or that the worst kind of violent criminal convicted and imprisoned and escaped from a foreign country who manages to get into this country can go in and buy a gun? . . . I'd say, Well, you know it's tough on Solzhenitsyn that he can't own a gun, but he'll probably get over it." Scalia also has a habit of telling lawyers whose position he agrees with how to make their arguments; this term, his guidance prompted one lawyer to say, "Thank you for throwing me the life pre-

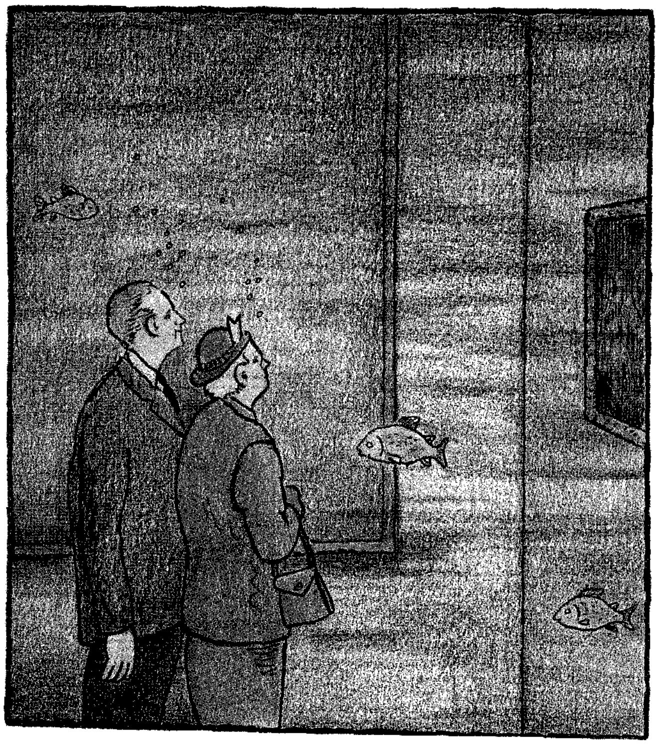
SKETCHBOOK BY GLEN BAXTER


Spring Comes to Dimchester Towers

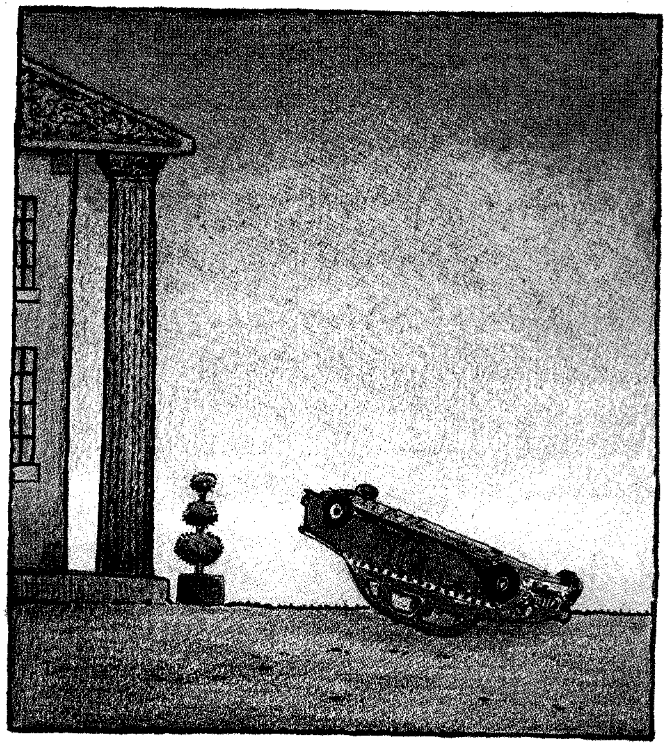
THE HERBACEOUS BORDERS ARE BEING TRIMMED IN READINESS FOR THE TOURIST SEASON.



GIORGIO, THE HEAD CHEF, IS PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HIS NEW RECIPE FOR BANANA BRIOCHE.



GUEST BEDROOMS ARE CHECKED FOR SIGNS OF DAMP.



AND HIGGINS, FROM RECEPTION, IS PARKING THE COURTESY CAR IN THE MAIN DRIVEWAY.

SORRY, GUYS. I'M SPENDING THE EVENING WITH MY LOVELY WIFE.

server." He often hustles these lawyers roughly through their paces, like a bodyguard pushing a client through a roiling crowd. "*That's* your strong point," he will say, or "I don't know *why* you give that one away."

Scalia evinces an almost absurdist delight in the sense and sound of words. When Justice Souter told a lawyer that he wanted to ask a "sort of complementary question," Scalia had to interrupt to ask, "Is that with an 'i' or an 'e'?" When Kennedy characterized a lawyer's argument as "Gothic jurisprudence," Scalia interjected dryly, "Rococo, I think."

He seems to require less preparation for battle than other Justices. He does not ask his clerks to prepare "bench memos," which summarize, in thirty to fifty pages, possible lines of questioning and relevant precedents. Instead, he asks for "two single-spaced pages," Christine Jolls, a former clerk who is now a law professor at Harvard, says. Jolls, who was Scalia's liberal clerk in the 1996-97 term, fondly recalls Scalia as "a prince to work for." She said, "He would always report back to us about the conferences the Justices have after oral arguments. Most of the Justices don't share that information with their clerks. But Justice Scalia would always block out time to give us a blow-by-blow. He thought we deserved to know. And he'd, in a genial way, do impersonations of the other Justices that were very funny."

In his early years on the Court, Scalia's exuberant questioning was not well received by his colleagues. In a 1988 speech, Justice Harry Blackmun, who retired in 1994, recalled how Scalia had grilled a lawyer named Penny White, a thirty-two-year-old solo practitioner from Johnson City, Tennessee. He "picked on her and picked on her and picked on her, and she gave it back to him," Blackmun said. "Finally, at the end of the case we walked off, and Nino said the only thing he could say: 'Wasn't she good? Wasn't she good?' The rest of us were completely silent. We knew she was *very* good." Lewis Powell, who retired from the Court in 1987, was even more put off by Scalia, according to John C. Jeffries, Jr., Powell's biographer. "Politically, Powell and Scalia were not so far apart, but personally, they were like oil and water," Jeffries writes. "Scalia's cheerful lack of deference rubbed his senior colleague the wrong way. His volubility struck Powell as bad manners. In Scalia's first oral argument he asked so many questions that Powell whispered . . . 'Do you think he knows that the rest of us are here?' "

The other Justices have since caught up with Scalia. Now all of them—with the exception of Clarence Thomas—are garrulous. Breyer will steeple his fingers and pose long, professorial hypotheticals. Ginsburg will peer through her glasses and tell a lawyer that his argument is "exceedingly weak," as she did in a case this fall. Souter is polite and elegant—he often frames possible solutions to a problem, rather than tearing apart others' arguments—but he, too, speaks at length. Sandra Day O'Connor can be as peevish as Scalia, matching his "for Pete's sake"s with her own "for goodness sake"s. But her frustration usually emerges when attorneys aren't telling her what she wants to know. O'Connor will tell a lawyer to "just answer the question for once," or snap at a lawyer who says she's asked a hard question to "do your best"—whereas Scalia's anger comes out when a lawyer says something that he considers fatuous. "Scalia walks into the room with a pretty clear idea of what he thinks about the case," a former O'Connor clerk told me. "His questioning is often very sharp toward the side he disagrees with, but he is really speaking to the other Justices, trying to show them how stupid this litigator is. O'Connor walks into the room danglingly conflicted about the case—she really wants to hear the answers to her questions, to help her make up her mind."

Gone are the days when Justice Hugo Black could advise a young Harry Blackmun, "Never ask many questions from the bench, because if you don't ask many questions, you won't ask many foolish questions." A. E. Dick Howard, a law professor at the University of Virginia, says, "There has been a sea change on oral argument over the last twenty years. In the eighties, there were three or four Justices who were content to sit back and let the advocate make his argument. Now it's like eight professors who all think they're going to ask the question that probes the deepest. They don't care about the architecture of an argument; they go straight to the issue they care about. They're using the lawyers as postmen to carry messages down the bench, and the result is often cacophony."

Though the constant interrogation makes the Court a surprisingly entertaining spectacle, it's hard sometimes not to feel sorry for the lawyers who are being skewered. Scalia and Breyer seem to be having the most fun, though in different ways. Breyer can look sleepy and disengaged when he isn't speaking—gazing at the ceiling through half-closed eyes, like a learned tortoise; he comes alive when he's unfurling one of his elaborate what-if scenarios. Scalia is perpetually sprung for action. He rocks in his chair like a restless kid waiting for his turn at the blackboard.

One afternoon in November, the Court heard a case brought by a girls' basketball coach named Roderick Jackson. Jackson had been fired from his job at a Birmingham, Alabama, high school after he complained that the girls' team received less funding and had shabbier facilities than the boys' team. Now he said that he was entitled to sue the school district under Title IX, the gender-equity law. The visitors' seats were filled. The marshal issued a warning about keeping quiet. With Ionic columns and claret-colored velvet curtains, the Court is one of those grand spaces which make you feel exalted. The rules of the house are high church: No audio or video recording is allowed. Leaning on one's elbows is frowned upon. A journalist must wear a suit to sit in the press gallery.

Such proprieties can seem overly decorous, given how unbridled the proceedings have become. The attorney for Coach Jackson was Walter Dellinger, a Supreme Court veteran. He did not make it very far into his argument before Scalia signalled that he found it ridiculous. By what conceivable logic, Scalia wondered, was the coach's firing predicated "on the basis of *sex*"? Had the coach been "excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under an education program?" Dellinger took up the challenge. "Absolutely," he said. But Scalia wouldn't let it go. "Do you think that *remotely* describes what happened to this coach?" he thundered.

The lawyer for the school district, Kenneth L. Thomas, was a slim, dapper fellow who addressed Ginsburg as "Ma'am." Breyer took him on, asking him to recall the "bad days of the nineteen-fifties in the South." He asked the lawyer to "imagine an individual" who "had been kept out of a restaurant or he'd been treated physically badly, not because of his race." He went on, "He was white but he was associating with people who were black. And they both go into a restaurant and they both are refused service. Maybe they're beaten up. I mean both of them. Now, can the white individual bring a lawsuit under the civil-rights statute? I've always thought the answer to that question is 'Of course.' "

Ginsburg, who made her legal career championing gender equality, clearly thought that teachers and coaches needed to be protected from retaliation if they stood up for girls. "It seems to me that if you're talking about the sixth-grade soccer team, realistically, the only one who is going to know anything and be brave enough to complain will be the teacher," she said. The lawyer argued that the coach should have sought redress by contacting the Atlanta branch of the Office of Civil Rights; an official investigation, he had said, would have embarrassed the school district, most likely resolving the issue without a lawsuit. But Ginsburg could all too easily imagine a frustrating response to the coach's call: "O.C.R. says, as it usually says, 'We're too busy, sorry. Congress didn't give us enough money.' "

Scalia stepped in to block Ginsburg's attack. He asked, "Do we have any idea how effective the enforcement of O.C.R. is?" Perhaps, he suggested, "anybody who gets a directive from them will hop to it."

The lawyer for the school district looked relieved. "Justice Scalia, that's exactly it!" he said. "I have firsthand knowledge that when they call we're supposed to jump. No doubt about it."

Scalia probably thought things were going well now. He had the lawyer's back. He tried to buttress the lawyer's argument by suggesting that the Office of Civil Rights frequently investigated complaints. "And do they call more than infrequently?" he asked hopefully.

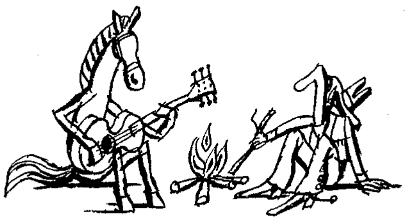
"*All* the time," the lawyer crowed.

But Ginsburg, who is as tenacious as Scalia, was still in the fight. She noted that the lawyer had cited only one instance in which the Office of Civil Rights had intervened in a Birmingham school. "Is there any other?" she asked in her nasal, persistent voice.

"Two," the lawyer replied reluctantly.

"In how many years?"

"Twenty-six," the lawyer admitted. He then added—so gamely that you had to hand it to the guy—"But they're *all* memorable."



Scalia took direct aim at Ginsburg. He argued that it was hardly the Court's job to "determine whether agencies are inefficient." Even if the Office of Civil Rights was failing miserably at its job, he said, it was absurd for "attorneys general to fill the void." During the proceedings, he sighed in disbelief more than once, and, at one point, he declared that the coach's claim of discrimination was simply too "weird" to be taken seriously.

Scalia, having inspired his brethren to become his equal in volubility, now primarily distinguishes himself with the force, and sometimes the scorn, of his written opinions. If his questioning is for the benefit of the other Justices, then his opinions seem to be for the benefit of a future generation that may yet be saved for originalism. While his dissents often nimbly dismantle the dodgy logic of the majority opinion, they do so in a tone of such bitter disappointment that it's hard to imagine his arguments winning over any Justice who voted against him. (In fact, his unstinting critiques often help his opponents refine their arguments in subsequent cases.)

Nowhere is Scalia's style more pronounced than in his opinions in abortion cases. Scalia believes that a right to abortion cannot be found in the text of the Constitution. He rejects the idea that the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of "liberty" implies other rights, such as the right to privacy and autonomy. When the Constitution's text is ambiguous or silent on a subject, Scalia's method is to determine whether a long-standing American tradition has supported the practice under challenge. "For me . . . the constitutionality of the death penalty is not a difficult, soul-wrenching question," he wrote in his *First Things* essay. "It was clearly permitted when the Eighth Amendment was adopted (not merely for murder, by the way, but for all felonies—including, for example, horse-thieving, as anyone can verify by watching a Western movie). And so it is clearly permitted today." Conversely, Scalia believes that, because abortion was outlawed in the United States for more than a century, one cannot claim that American tradition upholds a right to it. In 1992, in Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, the

Court allowed states to place some restrictions on abortion but, significantly, upheld the "essential holding" of Roe: that abortion is a constitutionally protected right. In part, the opinion relied on *stare decisis*, the principle of respecting precedent and "letting the decision stand." Whether Roe was right or wrong, the Court argued, Americans had come to rely on it. "To overrule, under fire, in the absence of the most compelling reason to reexamine a watershed decision would subvert the Court's legitimacy," Justice Souter wrote for the majority. Furthermore, Justice Kennedy added, in a line that conservative critics of the Court find foolish, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

Scalia's dissent was one of the most blistering opinions ever written by a Supreme Court Justice. "The Court's description of the place of Roe in the social history of the United States is unrecognizable," he said. He went on:

> Not only did Roe not, as the Court suggests, resolve the deeply divisive issue of abortion; it did more than anything else to nourish it, by elevating it to the national level, where it is infinitely more difficult to resolve. [Roe] created a vast new class of abortion consumers and abortion proponents by eliminating the moral opprobrium that had attached to the act. ("If the Constitution guarantees abortion, how can it be bad?"—not an accurate line of thought, but a natural one.) Many favor all of those developments, and it is not for me to say that they are wrong. But to portray Roe as the statesmanlike "settlement" of a divisive issue, a jurisprudential Peace of Westphalia that is worth preserving, is nothing less than Orwellian. Roe fanned into life an issue that has inflamed our national politics in general, and has obscured with its smoke the selection of Justices to this Court, in particular, ever since. And by keeping us in the abortion-umpiring business, it is the perpetuation of that disruption rather than of any Pax Roeana that the Court's new majority decrees.

In stressing the need to cling to Roe "under fire" and in the face of "great opposition," the Court's position smacked of "czarist arrogance," Scalia railed. "We have no Cossacks, but at least we can stubbornly refuse to abandon an erroneous opinion that we might otherwise change." He even insinuated that the majority opinion smacked of fascism, projecting nothing less than a "Nietzschean vision of us unelected, life-tenured judges, leading a *Volk*."

Scalia has a distinctive writing style—lucid, sarcastic, peppered with hyperbolic analogies (Cossacks, Nietzsche), offhand historical references (Peace of Westphalia), belittling dismissals of the majority opinion ("ludicrous," "preposterous," "appalling"), and occasional allusions—not too specific or up to date—to popular culture. The results can be trenchant and funny. In a 2001 dissent in which he opposed forcing the P.G.A. Tour to allow a disabled golfer to use a cart, he wrote that the Court had been asked to decide the "incredibly difficult and incredibly silly question" of whether walking was an essential aspect of golf, and that it should, "either out of humility or out of self-respect," decline the opportunity. "To say that something is 'essential' is ordinarily to say that it is necessary to the achievement of a certain object. But since it is the very nature of a game to have no object except amusement (that is what distinguishes games from productive activity) it is quite impossible to say that any of a game's arbitrary rules is 'essential.' " (Occasionally, Scalia gets carried away with the notion of himself as the Court's littérateur. A concurrence in a 1998 case inspired a dizzy reference to the Cole Porter song "You're the Top": Souter's opinion, Scalia wrote, "resuscitates the ne plus ultra, the Napoleon Brandy, the Mahatma Gandhi, the Cellophane of Subjectivity, th' ol' Shocks the Conscience Test.")

Cases in which Scalia believes that élite judges or professors are trying to dismantle the moral positions of "the people" bring out a particular vituperativeness, however, and leave the unavoidable impression that he is speaking not only for originalism but also for his own selective notion of the vox populi. In his dissent in Lawrence v. Texas, the sodomy case, he wrote, "Today's opinion is the product of a Court which is the product of a law-profession culture, that has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda, by which I mean the agenda promoted by some homosexual activists directed at eliminating the moral opprobrium that has traditionally attached to homosexual conduct. . . . Many Americans do not want persons who openly engage in homosexual conduct as partners in their business, as Scoutmasters for their children, as teachers in their children's schools, or boarders in their home. They view this as protecting themselves and their families from a lifestyle that they believe to be immoral and destructive." And because these Americans believe that their objection to gay people is based on moral principle—or, rather, because Scalia says they do—the Court shouldn't call it discrimination.

In an earlier gay-rights case, Romer v. Evans, which declared unconstitutional an amendment passed by Colorado citizens exempting homosexuals from protection under anti-discrimination laws, Justice Kennedy had written for the majority that "a State cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws." It was a simple, profound argument, and it lacked the logical flaws of some of the Court's abortion rulings. But Scalia was unimpressed. The amendment, he wrote, was "a modest attempt by seemingly tolerant Coloradans to preserve traditional sexual mores against the efforts of a politically powerful minority to revise those mores through use of laws." The Court had "no business imposing upon all Americans the resolution favored by the élite class from which the members of this institution are selected, pronouncing that 'animosity' towards homosexuality . . . is evil." (Kennedy's opinion had not used the word "evil.")

In other, more idiosyncratic ways, Scalia has shown his preference for maintaining the status quo. In 1996, he wrote the lone dissent in a decision requiring the Virginia Military Institute to admit women. (Clarence Thomas, his most frequent companion in dissent, had to recuse himself because his son attended the school.) Scalia argued that "the function of the Court is to *preserve* our society's values regarding (among other things) equal protection, not to *revise* them." Nor could he resist waxing sentimental about V.M.I.'s "old-fashioned" code of "manly honor." Scalia's insistent traditionalism extends even to the political spoils system. In a 1990 case, Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois, in which the Supreme Court ruled against rewarding Party service with government jobs, Scalia again dissented: "As the merit principle has been extended and its effects increasingly felt; as the Boss Tweeds, the Tammany Halls, the Pendergast Machines, the Byrd Machines, and the Daley Machines have faded into history; we find that political leaders at all levels increasingly complain of the helplessness of elected government, unprotected by 'party discipline' before the demands of small and cohesive interest groups."

In his V.M.I. dissent, Scalia wrote that the Court had a duty to respect "those constant and unbroken national traditions that embody the people's understanding of ambiguous constitutional texts." Scalia has consistently championed this principle. But in his identification of which American traditions are "unbroken" he can be selective and historically misleading. After all, slavery and segregation were "unbroken national traditions" for many years. And, while political patronage certainly has a place in American history, it has long been challenged by an equally robust tradition of meritocracy.

Scalia's frequent invocation of tradition is based on the originalist method, but it also clearly suits his political temperament. He has a conservative's skepticism about using the law as an instrument of morality. Good societies are not achieved by good laws, he has written, but are built upon the "effect of one good person upon another," and to expect more from law than from good behavior "demeans virtue." In Scalia's view, we shouldn't strive for an ideal society but, rather, make do with this one, in spite of its flaws and inequalities. Thus, when he is asked in public appearances about the Declaration of Independence, and its promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, he describes it as an aspirational document that has no relevance for the judiciary. In a 1987 essay in which he cited examples of "good societies," he reached far into the past, choosing the Athens of Pericles, Cicero's Rome, Dante's Florence, Elizabeth I's England, and George Washington's United States. He loves Robert Bolt's play "A Man for All Seasons"—the story of Thomas More, who would not swerve from either his principles or his Catholic faith to approve Henry VIII's divorce. "I think he sees himself the way Thomas More did, as a defender of the law," Douglas Kmiec says. (He probably identifies, too, with what Bolt called More's "adamantine sense of self.")

Scalia attends St. Catherine of Siena in Great Falls, Virginia, one of the few Catholic churches in the Washington area where, contrary to Vatican II reforms, a Latin Mass is held on Sunday. He has four daughters and five sons, including Eugene, the Solicitor of Labor in the Bush Administration; Matthew, who served as an infantry captain in Iraq; and Paul, a priest with the diocese of Arlington, Virginia, whom the newsletter *Priests for Life* recently described as "young, fervent, energetic, brilliant, and orthodox." Father Paul Scalia has counselled, in response to a questioner on a Web site for Catholic mothers, that it would never "be acceptable to attend the wedding of a Catholic attempting to marry outside the Church." He has written for pro-life publications and has condemned "contemporary" liturgical music that aspires to relevance. Justice Scalia recently joked with a visitor, "One priest in the family makes up for two lawyers."

Scalia himself has praised, most recently in his speech in Baton Rouge, "traditional Catholics" who say the Rosary, go on pilgrimages, and "follow religiously the teaching of the Pope." His vision of the judge's role has an ecclesiastical aura of stringency and renunciation. "I don't deal with policy—that's not my business," he once told an audience at Brooklyn College. "I gave it up when I took the veil." Even his leisure habits—duck, pheasant, and turkey hunting, poker games with members of the Republican establishment, lunch at the stalwart A.V. Ristorante, little reading outside of work—seem drawn from some older code of manly conduct. When, last year, the Los Angeles *Times* reported that Scalia had gone on a hunting trip with Vice-President Cheney, and the Sierra Club asked that he recuse himself from a case involving Cheney, Scalia refused, responding with a memo that revealed, among other things, the rigors of his hunting vacations: "The group hunted that afternoon and Tuesday and Wednesday mornings; it fished (in two boats) Tuesday afternoon. All meals were in common. Sleeping was in rooms of two or three, except for the vice president, who had his own quarters."

Scalia's fervency has undermined his ability to form coalitions on the Court. He would rather come out swinging than soften his words in anticipation of some future case. "These opinions where he berates Justice O'Connor, she takes it personally, I think," the former O'Connor clerk told me. "There are cases where she might have been persuadable had he been more sensitive to the need to cultivate her—even just to the extent of not actively attacking her. I always wondered to what extent her staying on the Court and not retiring had to do with him. Everyone said it was because she didn't want to resign in the wake of the controversy over Bush v. Gore—but partly, maybe, it was not wanting there to be two Scalias on the Court. I think his tone with her has pushed her against him. I never saw them calling or coming to one another's chambers, as Justices will occasionally do, if they have differing but similar opinions. For most of them, there is an effort to build

"Iced grande soy triple-lutz latte!"

relationships—to sign on to an opinion that you agree with ninety per cent, or to say, 'If you could change X and Y, then I could join your opinion.' I never saw any of that between them."

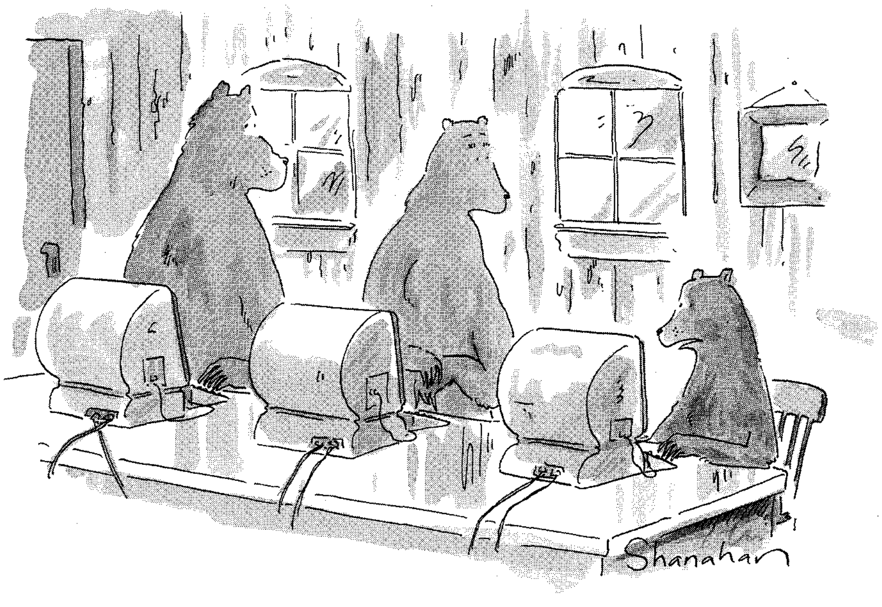
O'Connor and Kennedy, the swing votes on the current Court, do not adhere to any strict theory of interpretation. For them, each case presents, to some degree, a fresh dilemma. O'Connor, a minimalist who prefers small steps and compromise positions, seems to be a special disappointment to Scalia. The former O'Connor clerk said, "O'Connor does try to have it both ways and sometimes that leads her into a position that is kind of incoherent or at least not intellectually consistent. And intellectual consistency is Scalia's lodestar."

For this reason, it has been easier for him to be friends with Thomas, who is consistent and who agrees with him, and with Ginsburg, who is consistent and who disagrees with him. Although Thomas is more extreme than Scalia in his willingness to overturn precedent, Scalia told Thomas's biographer, Ken Foskett, that they share a contrarian temperament. Ginsburg is a closer personal friend, however. The Scalia and Ginsburg families spend every New Year's Eve together. Ginsburg has said that Scalia is the only one of her brethren who can reliably make her laugh—and the only one who can carry a tune. Scalia has said that Ginsburg is the liberal with whom he'd most like to be stuck on a desert island. "Sometimes he has an Italian temper that flares up," Ginsburg told an audience at the Georgia State law school in 2003. Still, she recalled, when she wrote the majority opinion in the V.M.I. case Scalia came to her chambers to show her a draft of his dissent, saying, " 'Ruth, you're not going to like this . . . but I want you to have my dissent as early as I can give it to you so you'll have time to respond.' " Ginsburg added, "He absolutely ruined my weekend, but my opinion is ever so much better because of his stinging dissent."

Despite Scalia's failure as a politician, he has influenced the way the Rehnquist Court approaches jurisprudence. In a 1996 speech, Scalia said, "I don't care if the framers of the Constitution had some secret meaning in mind when they adopted its words. I take the words as they were promulgated to the people of the United States, and what is the fairly understood meaning of those words." He approaches statutes the same way. He never asks what the legislature meant; there is only the text, and Scalia is certainly no postmodern relativist. "Words do have a limited range of meaning, and no interpretation that goes beyond that is reasonable," he has said. Under Scalia's brusque tutelage, the other Justices have paid closer attention to the language of particular statutes. And he has been strikingly successful at getting his brethren to give less importance to a statute's legislative history. In its 1981-82 session, the Court examined a law's legislative history in almost every statutory case. By the early nineties, according to a study by Gregory Maggs, a law professor at George Washington University, it was used in only forty per cent of the cases. "With Justice Scalia breathing down the neck of anyone who peeks into the *Congressional Record* or Senate reports, the other members of the Court may have concluded that the benefit of citing legislative history does not outweigh its costs," Maggs wrote.

Scalia's vote against the flag-desecration amendment was not the only time he has aligned himself with the Court's liberals. Scalia believes that the Constitution offers a powerful set of rights for the accused. Last year, in Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, in which a plurality upheld the Bush Administration's right to classify U.S. citizens as enemy combatants and detain them indefinitely, Scalia dissented, noting that "the very core of liberty secured by our Anglo-Saxon system of separated powers has been freedom from indefinite imprisonment." And last term, in Blakely v. Washington, Scalia wrote the opinion for an atypical majority—he was joined by Stevens, Souter, Thomas, and Ginsburg—declaring that judges could not increase criminal sentences beyond the maximums stipulated by statutes. The practice, he wrote, undermined the "fundamental" right to trial by jury.

Scalia's influence has also been felt in jurisprudence involving matters of religion, where he has pushed the Court in a novel direction that has angered many Americans, both religious and nonreligious. In Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith, Scalia wrote a majority opinion holding that a law did not pose a constitutional problem simply because it might jeopardize a religious practice. The 1990 case involved a challenge to Oregon's drug laws; Alfred Smith, a drug-and-alcohol counsellor, had been fired from his job for using peyote as part of a religious ceremony in the Native American Church. Smith claimed that in denying him unemployment benefits—on the basis that he was fired for "misconduct"—the state was violating his rights under the free-exercise clause. Scalia's opinion that an individual's religious views do not "excuse him from compliance with an otherwise valid law" infuriated both religious and civil-liberties groups, and prompted Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. According to the act, a state law that imposed substan-



"Someone's been hacking into my computer, too, and now I'm a lifetime member of Hot Wet Coeds."

NO WARNING NO REASON

Because he left her, she must make him
someone she doesn't love, rescripting as
deception their hand-clasped walks at dusk
when she felt his was the hand of God
linking her to him because she was
so blessed to be given this love
this late in life. It must have been lies:
each touching word, all thoughtfulness,
his shows of pleasure putting her first,
his endearing sex talk that first
amused her then got to her
(his hot moist breath the poison in her ear)
as he learned with seemingly selfless patience
how to move inside her as no one ever had before.
How can she change memories like these?
He must have been lying
because the man who did these things
could not leave her with no warning or reason.
But she knows he wasn't,
and, because she knows he wasn't,
she is stuck. No one can help her.
No one can enter the sacred circle they made together
she now wears as a necklace of fire.
How can she obliterate the person he is?
What is she to do? She has to live.

—*Michael Ryan*

tial burdens on religious practice could pass muster only if the state could show that it had a "compelling interest" in doing so. In 1997, Scalia joined a Court majority in declaring the act unconstitutional.

Nevertheless, Scalia is an advocate for the mingling of government and religion. In cases that have come before the Court, he has rarely seen a constitutional problem with government financing of religious groups or with government sponsorship of religious displays. He told a recent visitor to the Court that the metaphor of a wall between church and state cannot be found in the Constitution and has no legitimate place in our legal tradition. In America, he said, the notion was championed by the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing movement of the nineteenth century, in order to justify withholding money from Catholic schools. (He cited a recent book, "Separation of Church and State," by the University of Chicago law professor Philip Hamburger, that makes this argument.) Legal scholars have pointed out that the wall-of-separation metaphor may be unhelpfully rigid, and that Thomas Jefferson, who used the phrase in a letter to Connecticut Baptists, may never have imagined it as the last word on the subject. But Scalia seems to hold it in especially low regard.

In New York on the Monday before Thanksgiving, Scalia donned a black yarmulke to speak at the Shearith Israel synagogue on Central Park West. Golden light streamed through the Tiffany stained-glass windows onto an elegantly dressed late-morning crowd. Scalia quoted Justice William Douglas, who said that American institutions "presuppose the existence of a Supreme Being." He added that, in the American context, neutrality did not mean "neutrality between religiousness and non-religiousness but between denominations"—that is, our government couldn't favor one religion over another, but it could certainly favor religion. He asked the audience whether it thought that European secularism had helped the Jews of Europe; surely they would have been better off in America. He gleefully revealed that Benjamin Franklin—that icon of rational cosmopolitanism—had, during a rough patch in the Constitutional Convention, suggested that a chaplain be brought in every morning to pray.

Last month, the Court heard a case involving the public display of the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol. During the oral arguments, Scalia chided the lawyer who argued that it was constitutional to display the Decalogue on public property because Moses' commandments were a foundation of American law. Even though the lawyer represented the side he would presumably agree with, Scalia pushed him repeatedly for an admission that the Decalogue was a religious statement, and that to pretend otherwise did both religion and the Ten Commandments a disservice. "If you're watering it down to say that the only reason it's O.K. is it sends nothing but a secular message, I can't agree with you," Scalia said. "I think the message it sends is that law—and our institutions—comes from God. And if you don't think it conveys that message I just think you're kidding yourself." When the lawyer claimed that the commandments were the basis of the Declaration of Independence, Scalia called the argument "idiotic." The commandments, he said later, are "a symbol of the fact that government derives its authority from God." This was a startling assertion, but of a piece with earlier Scalia statements, such as his claim, in the *First Things* essay, that the American people's "un-European" religiosity helps explain why we "are more inclined to understand, as St. Paul did, that government carries the sword as 'minister of God' to 'execute wrath' upon the evildoer."

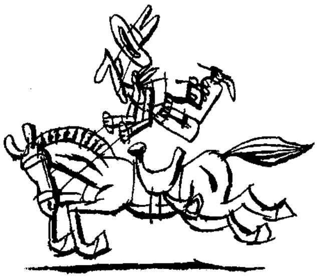
For Scalia, the first words in the Bill of Rights ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof") mean only that America should not have a national church or coerce people—"by force of law and threat of penalty," as he puts it—into participating in religious exercises. In 1992, he excoriated the majority decision in Lee v. Weisman, which concluded that prayers said at a public-school graduation constituted an unacceptable form of coercion. The majority's argument that students would feel unduly pressured to pray against their will, Scalia said, was "psychology practiced by amateurs." Moreover, religious faith required a public forum for its expression: "Church and state would not be such a difficult subject if religion were, as the Court apparently thinks it to be, some purely personal avocation that can be indulged entirely in secret, like pornography."

Some of Scalia's positions on religion have been adopted by the majority. For example, the Court has moved toward permitting some government funding of religious schools. And yet it's hard to identify a Scalia Doctrine that speaks for the Court, as opposed to a Scalia Doctrine that speaks for Scalia. Imperfect though some of O'Connor's tests may be—like the "undue burden" standard for evaluating state restrictions on abortion—they have taken hold in a way that Scalia's more rigorous formulas have not. Scalia would love to expunge the phrase "evolving standards of decency" from the Court's lexicon—but it keeps cropping up in decisions. He would like to stop his fellow-jurists from citing the examples of foreign courts and legislatures, which they often do in death-penalty cases, but he has not. ("You talk about how it's nice to know we're on the right track, that we have the same moral and legal framework as the rest of the world," he said in a recent debate on the subject with Stephen Breyer at American University's law school. "But we don't *have* the same moral and legal framework as the rest of the world, and never have. If you told the framers of the Constitution that what we're after is to do something that will be just like Europe, they would have been appalled.") And, of course, he would have liked the Court to overturn Roe and declare that it has no authority to say anything about abortion. For all his brilliance, Scalia has repeatedly failed at the art of persuasion.

Some of Scalia's many critics like to hunt for his inconsistencies—cases where he has deviated from originalist precepts simply to come up with a result that he preferred. (Anyone who declares his allegiance to a particular interpretive method as flamboyantly as Scalia does is asking for such scrutiny.) On this score, Bush v. Gore is a clear embarrassment for Scalia. He signed on to a majority opinion that limited itself to the particular circumstances of the 2000 election battle, even though he has regularly argued that the Court should try to establish clear rules with broad applicability. In his V.M.I. opinion, he wrote, "The Supreme Court of the United States does not sit to announce 'unique' dispositions. Its principal function is to establish precedent—that is, to set forth principles of law that every court in America must follow." Also troubling was his willingness to flout his conservative commitment to respect the integrity of state political processes. Gary Rosen, one of the few conservative critics of Bush v. Gore, has written, "If judicial self-restraint means anything, it is that the Justices should respect the prerogatives of the other branches of state and federal governments, especially with regard to those 'political questions,' as they are known in legal circles, that do not clearly fall within the Court's institutional competence and would needlessly involve it in partisan controversy."

Scalia, for his part, has indicated that there are a few instances where he does not toe the originalist line. Public flogging or branding would most likely not be permitted by courts today, he has written, even though both were permitted at the time that the Eighth Amendment was passed. And, he implied, this is the proper response. Here, presumably, "evolving values" cannot be denied.

Scalia's over-all voting record, however, is remarkably free of contradiction. To some, that's a problem, a sign of an overly settled mind. "If you gave constitutional-law professors a hundred church-state cases, they could tell you with almost a hundred-per-cent accuracy how Scalia would vote in each one," Stephen Gillers, a liberal law professor at New York University Law School, told me. "Scalia always knows what he thinks going into a case. And yet you'd like to think that there are judges with skill and qualities of personality that will enable them to reconsider, or at least be sympathetic to, the best arguments made by people with whom they don't normally agree. That's the meaning of deliberativeness."



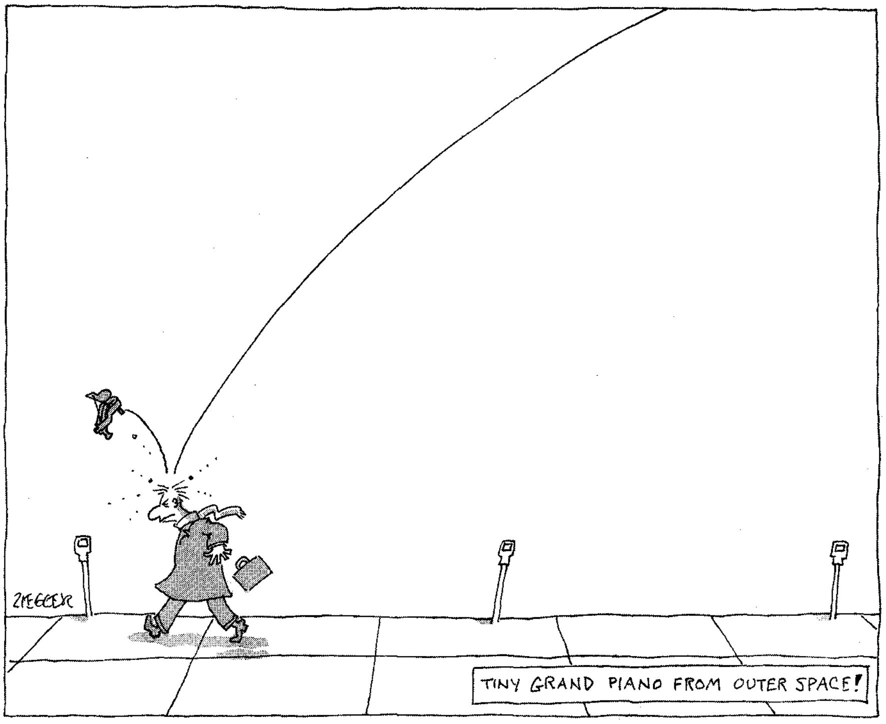
Other Justices are similarly consistent in their voting on some issues, but none of them publicly declaim the virtues of their method in the tireless, martial way that Scalia does. If anything, Scalia's air of conviction has grown more robust in recent years. Where he once described himself as a "faint-hearted originalist" and, in 1988, gave a speech called "Originalism: The Lesser Evil," he is now likely to say, when asked, for instance, how one could know precisely what a text meant two hundred years ago, that it is just "not that hard." He often says, "I sleep very well at night."

When you hear Scalia speak, you can tell that there are people in the audience who, to their own surprise, can't help but appreciate his swagger. They're a little dazzled by his claim that he doesn't care about the outcome of a case. They're amused when he argues that "non-originalism is not an interpretive philosophy" and adds, "It just means you don't agree with me!" Which—until you remember that the fact that you're not an originalist does not mean you're condemned to stumble cluelessly from case to case—sounds convincing.

And yet it's unclear how a pure originalist would ever get to some of the outcomes that we now consider essential to our liberties and our conception of equality—Brown v. Board of Education, for instance, which Scalia is asked about so often in his public appearances that he will say things like "Waving the bloody shirt of Brown again, eh?" Though Scalia says that he would have voted with the majority in Brown, it's hard to see an originalist justification for it. (He sometimes acknowledges as much, saying that a faulty—that is, a non-originalist—method can occasionally produce good results, a Scalian variation on "Even a broken watch is right twice a day.") Nor is it clear, on a purely textual level, that the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantees of equal protection extend to schooling. (The same Congress that passed the Fourteenth Amendment segregated Washington schools.) And Scalia's resort to tradition when the text is ambiguous wouldn't have helped to overturn segregation, either, since segregation was a long-standing American tradition. The way to get to Brown, and many other civil-rights decisions that we now take for granted, is through a willingness to do what Scalia abhors—to translate the fundamental principles of the Constitution into contemporary terms, to embrace the "living Constitution," to allow courts to decide how values enshrined in the Constitution ought to be applied to modern life. A doctrinaire originalist, the prominent legal scholar Cass Sunstein has written, would not only reject Brown but find that "New York Times v. Sullivan, the cornerstone of modern free speech doctrine, is also wrong; that the government may ban political dissent when it is dangerous . . . that the federal government can discriminate on the basis of race and sex however it wishes; that much racial discrimination and nearly all sex discrimination by the states is unobjectionable; that compulsory school prayer is constitutionally acceptable; that, in short, most of the modern constitutional law . . . is illegitimate, fatally undemocratic, a kind of usurpation."

Moreover, as Sunstein points out, the question of "whether the original understanding of an old text should bind current generations is not at all simple." He explains, "We can agree that the Constitution itself should be taken as binding without finding it self-evident that Americans must be bound by past understandings of votes by some segment of the citizenry over two centuries ago." The Constitution, it should be noted, does not stipulate the rules for its interpretation—and the idea that the framers would have welcomed scrutiny of its provisions in the light of changed circumstances is at least as plausible as the notion that the framers intended to freeze, for all time, the meaning of due process or cruel and unusual punishment. All of this calls into doubt Scalia's certainty that he is right. "The great generalities of the Constitution have a content and significance that vary from age to age," Justice Benjamin Cardozo said in 1921. "The method of free decision sees through the transitory particulars and reaches what is permanent behind them."

Lately, it seems that Justice Scalia is campaigning for the job of Chief Justice. Just last year, he was so averse to press coverage that he allowed federal marshals to seize the tape recorders of two reporters who attended one of his speeches. In January, however, he consented to C-SPAN coverage of his debate with Justice Breyer at American University, and, on March 14th, he permitted the filming of a talk that he gave at the Woodrow Wilson Center, in Washington.


ZIEGLER
TINY GRAND PIANO FROM OUTER SPACE!

• •

If Bush nominated Scalia for Chief Justice, there would certainly be a fight in the Senate, but he would probably be approved. Even the Senate Minority Leader, Harry Reid, said, speaking on "Meet the Press" in December, that although he often disagreed with Scalia's opinions, he did not dispute that "this is one smart guy." (In the same interview, Reid called Clarence Thomas "an embarrassment to the Supreme Court.") Of course, there are good reasons that Bush might not pick Scalia. For one thing, the President might hesitate to nominate someone who is sixty-nine. (Thomas is fifty-six, while J. Harvie Wilkinson, Samuel Alito, and Michael Luttig, three of the federal judges thought to be leading candidates, are sixty, fifty-four, and fifty, respectively.) Moreover, if Bush promoted from within the Court, his Administration would have to face two confirmation hearings instead of one. Earlier Presidents have tended to appoint Chief Justices from outside the Court.

It's possible that if Scalia were elected he would emulate Rehnquist—who was more acerbic in his opinion-writing as an Associate Justice than he has been as Chief—and rein himself in a bit. Since he gets along well with his colleagues, and likes a good joke, he would probably run a lively conference. But whereas Rehnquist has moved somewhat toward the doctrinal center since becoming Chief, it's hard to imagine Scalia moderating his views. He might soften his tone but not his ideology.

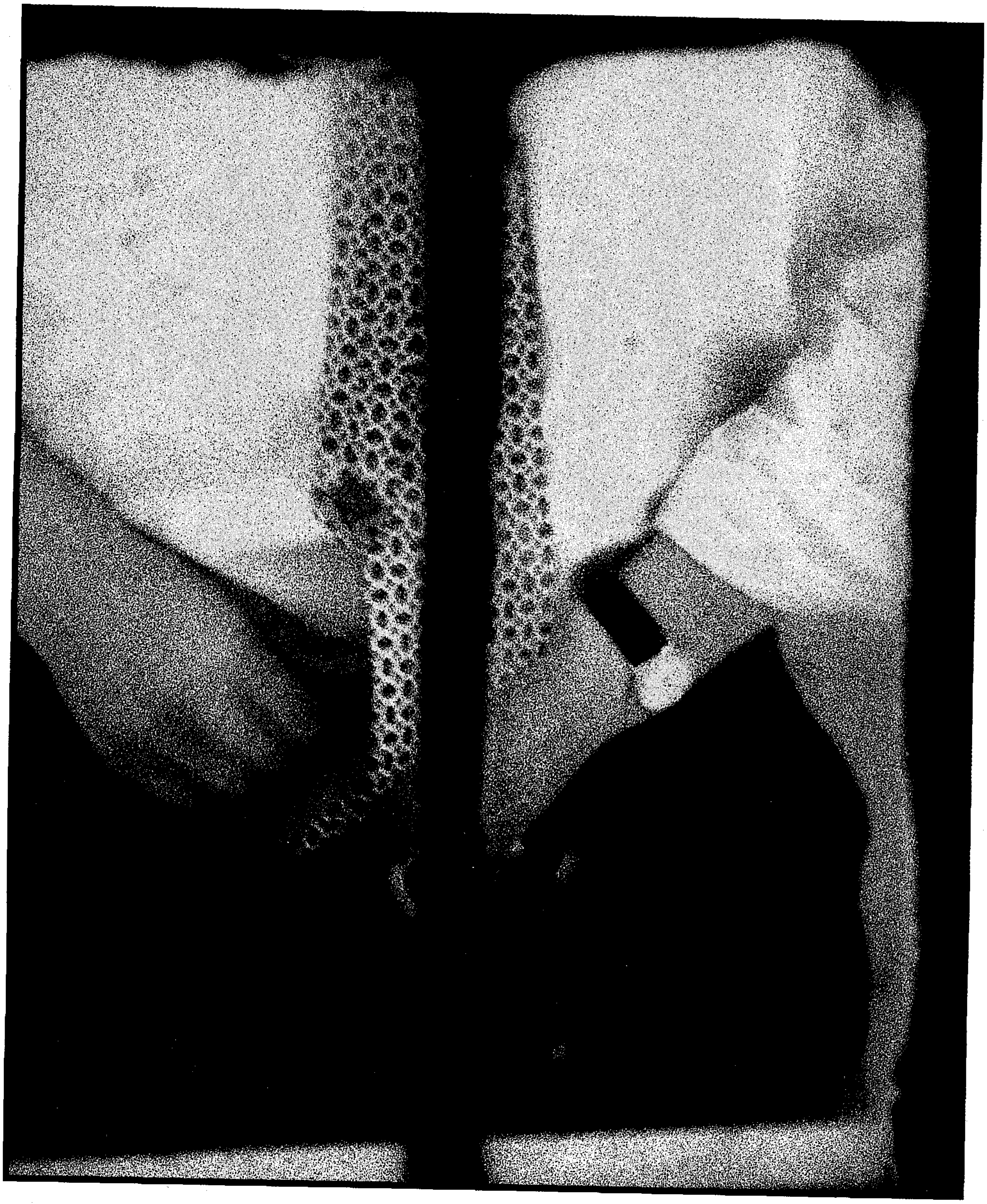
Indeed, at the Wilson Center, although his voice was quieter than usual, the content of his speech was not. Scalia said that the idea that the Constitution was a "living organism" was "anthropomorphism" equivalent to "your stock broker when he tells you the market is resting for an assault on the eleven-hundred level." He added, "The stock market is not a mountain climber and the constitution is not a living organism." He forcefully declared that originalism was the only way. "There really is nothing else," he stated flatly. The Constitution should be read like any other statute, he said: "You either tell your judges, 'Look, this is a law like all laws. Give it the meaning it had when it was adopted.' Or you tell your judges, 'Govern us. . . . *You* make these decisions for us.' "

He also made a gesture aimed, perhaps, at setting liberals and Democrats at ease. "I have my rules that confine me," he said. "I'm looking for the original meaning and when I find it I am handcuffed." He added mischievously, "I cannot do *all* the mean conservative things I would love to do to this society." ♦

FICTION

A SECRET STATION

BY DAVID GATES



At a decent interval after his seventy-first birthday, Martine sat him down: she was leaving him, moving to New York. To be with a man he presumed she'd met at that conference—last fall, had it been?—from which she'd returned two days late, after supposedly seeing friends and taking in the new production of "Cosi" at the Met. She would come up a couple of days a week to teach the rest of her classes, then figure out what was next. She would ask for nothing in their settlement. Well, no blame to her: if she lived to be ninety, as more and more people were doing, she had half her life ahead of her. She said, "The one thing I swore not to do, I swore not to be trite and ask you to understand." Oh? Had she not also sworn to forsake all others? But he couldn't very well get on his high horse about that.

When the spring semester ended, he went in and told Jack Stephenson that he was retiring. Jack had been urging this for years—"You could get back into research"; "You and Martine could travel"—but now he said, "Are you sure this is the time?"

"What's this?" He sniffed. "The sweet scent of compassion?"

Jack shook his head. "I just don't want to have to replace you with some twerp out of Johns Hopkins." This was Jack giving himself airs: who from Johns Hopkins would come to a state university up in the snow country, with a hospital that looked like a parking garage?

"You'll bear up," he said. "With what you've been paying me, you can hire *two* twerps."

"There's that." Jack frowned at the flat computer screen on his desk. "One second. Let me deal with this idiocy." He hammered at the keyboard with his index fingers, stopped, nodded, and clicked the mouse. "Sometimes I wish I were back tapping old ladies' knees with a rubber hammer." He took a deep breath, held it, let it out. "Since we're being frank, I have to tell you, I do have some concern. I know it hasn't been an easy year. Do you really want another change in your life just now?"

"Aren't *you* the soul of delicacy. They ought to have made you dean long ago."

"Whoa." Jack raised a hand as if to protect his face. "I'm not your enemy, Don."

"It's a moot point anyway," he said. "I've decided to become a Doctor Without Borders."

"You can't be serious." In fairness to Jack, Martine hadn't got this joke, either. "Well, I mean, of course there's nothing worthier. But, my God, you've been in the classroom for what? Longer than *I've* been here."

"I do like the way you put things."

"Don. With all due respect, I'm not quite seeing you as Mother Teresa. Couldn't you assuage your conscience by volunteering at a clinic once a week?"

"The still, small voice," he said.

Jack looked at him over the top of his half-glasses. "You *have* lost your fucking mind. O.K., look, here's what we're going to do. We're going to keep your office as is. You go off and think this over, and when you're ready to—"

He held up both hands. "Will it save time if I tell you that I'm not interested in what *you're* going to do?"

Jack took off his glasses and laid them on his desk. "Don, are you talking to someone?"

"A higher power?"

"I can suggest a very good—"

"You'll have to excuse me. I hear that still, small voice calling."

"Always smarter than everyone," Jack said. "I've never doubted that you could dance rings around me. But, just as your friend—and if I'm out of line here you can tell me to go peddle my papers—isn't it possible that you're well out of this thing?"

"I suspect 'marriage' is the word you're looking for," he said. "If you don't mind, I'll be dancing off."

They'd planned the trip back in November, at Red Fish Blue Fish, the one really decent restaurant in town. Dinner was on Martine: the English Department had just made her a full professor. It helped to think that at this point she hadn't fully decided to leave. Paris, Amsterdam, Prague, and on to Rome—to visit his daughter and her husband—then to Crete for the first three weeks of July.

"Can people still go to Jim Morrison's grave?" Martine had said. "In Père Lachaise?"

"I have no idea," he said. "He was the singer, was he not? I wouldn't have thought he came up to your idea of a poet."

"He didn't," she said. "He was just the most beautiful man who ever lived. Present company excepted." She broke off a morsel of bread and dipped it into the saucer of olive oil. "So, will Rebecca be her usual intransigent self?"

"You've met Rebecca *once*. In ten years."

"Q.E.D," she said.

"At any rate, we're only going to be there for two days."

"I guess I shouldn't complain," she said. "I *am* a home wrecker. Wasn't that the draw for you in the first place?"

Before leaving for the airport, he flushed away all but one of his last Viagra samples; then he flew across the Atlantic beside Martine's empty seat. In Paris, he swallowed the last blue pill and, for the first time in his life, picked up a prostitute: a tall, broad-shouldered young woman made taller than him by spike heels that had her on tiptoes. "So you know," she said as she took his hand, "I am not a *twahn-nee*." What a world: did they now have trainees? He instructed her in what he liked, but found that he no longer liked what he liked. In Amsterdam, he drank a bottle of wine with dinner and had a brandy afterward, then went to a coffeehouse and smoked marijuana, which he hadn't tried since a party on the night Robert Kennedy announced that he was running for President. It had been amusing then, but this overwhelmed him. He couldn't imagine what was happening to him—could it have been laced with something? When he managed to find his hotel again, he spent what he believed to be hours lying on his side on the white sexagonal tiles of the bathroom floor, unable to raise himself to do his vomiting in the toilet. In the morning, he put the bathmat and the towel he'd cleaned up with in a plastic bag meant for valet service and took a taxi to the airport. Instead of continuing on to Prague and Rome, he flew back to New York, paying fifteen hundred dollars to change his ticket. In a Portosan off the bicycle path along the Hudson, he feasted on a street boy who must have known he'd never done this before: artfully unshaven, hair artfully mussed. The boy let loose in his mouth, then

MERRY ALPERN, "UNTITLED," FROM "DIRTY WINDOWS" (1995)/BONNI BENRUBI GALLERY

beat him, took his wallet, and kicked him with the snakeskin cowboy boots that had been the pretext for their conversation. In the emergency room at St. Vincent's, he told the young woman doctor that he was a doctor, too; she slipped him an envelope with a few Percodans to hold him till he could get to an oral surgeon.

When he got back upstate, he arranged to rent the main house to Karen Friedman, a resident in neurology who'd been his most promising student two years—no, three years—earlier, and her partner, as the expression went, a dumpy older woman named Gloria, who managed the Staples store at the mall out on the bypass. He put the Volvo away in the barn and covered it with a blue plastic tarpaulin. (Martine used to say the car made her feel like a "doctor's-wife impersonator," which was why she'd picked it out.) He drove his Jeep up the hill behind the house to the cabin that he and Nathan had built the summer Nathan turned sixteen: their last father-son project. A couple of years ago, he'd had a contractor install a woodstove and a composting privy. Electricity came through a series of hundred-foot orange cords, the first plugged into the outlet down on the back porch, the last connected to a power strip for the computer, coffeemaker, microwave, small cubic refrigerator, and combination radio/compact-disk player. The cabin had served as a guesthouse and a—what word wouldn't be pretentious? The place where he'd done his taxes. He stacked split cordwood between the trees around the cabin, making a meandering wall with a gap by the front door. On a tree a little way down the steep path to the house, he hung a clapperless bell and a large eyebolt, so visitors could give warning.

Jimmy Huggins, whose office had been across the hall from his, had taken over the reconstruction of his mouth. The choice was between implants (which Jimmy said were now the "gold standard") and bridges, which would involve grinding down undamaged teeth on either side of the extractions. In the meantime, to manage the pain he phoned in a Percodan prescription to the Rite Aid in the mall (they knew him at the family-owned pharmacy on University Avenue), in the name of Kaspar Hauser.

He had brought a single carton of books up from his library: Anthony Powell, Simenon (to see if he could get his French back), Patrick O'Brian, the Oxford Shakespeare. He hadn't read Shakespeare since Princeton—half a century ago—and how could you stand before God without having tasted the best his world had to offer? (He now allowed himself God thoughts: intellectual integrity was no longer worth the vigilance.) Sitting in the Morris chair, he worked his way through "Lear" again, but "Othello" turned out to be a bit close to home.

He filled gallon plastic jugs, ten at a time, at the kitchen sink, and carried them up in the Jeep. He had a spatterware basin, a handsome thing Martine had bought, for doing dishes, rinsing with mouthwash (brushing was still uncomfortable), shaving, and washing above the waist. Saturday night was bath night, as in his childhood; after the girls went into town, for a movie or for dinner with whoever their friends were, he walked down to the house, filled the clawfoot tub that Martine had restored, and poured in their perfumed bath salts. If they knew, they knew: he was becoming a strange old man. Percodan was no longer doing the trick, so Kaspar Hauser had been put on Dilaudid. He moved his bowels in the privy—because of the drugs, he supposed, he'd had to resort to laxatives—but pissed on the ground, like Adam. Sometimes he would unplug the power strip, fling the end of the orange cord out the window, and let the cabin float free.

He had given thought to the possibility of AIDS, and decided that it was unlikely. His mouth had been bloodied only afterward, but he had swallowed the boy's semen, not knowing what else to do and not wanting to seem—untender. So he drew a sample from his arm and sent it to the lab. The negative result, of course, meant nothing: he would have to take another sample in six months. He made a note on the December 31st page of the year's DayMinder: *1/8—Draw blood.*

One Saturday night, early in the fall, he went upstairs after his bath, the towel around his waist, smelling of roses and remote on Dilaudid, his old man's dugs swinging. In the master bedroom, he found a pair of Gloria's black lace underwear in the top drawer of what had been his dresser. They were so large that the scalloped rim slipped down to his buttocks, exposing his pubic hair, still mockingly black: the hair on his head had been white for years. He tried to imagine himself inhabiting the bulky, penis-free body that would fill these—"panties" was the word—but couldn't quite cross over. He lay down on the bed and turned on his side. He'd got so lanky that his knees banged together. He put a pillow between them, and reached into the panties to handle himself, to make his disgrace definitive, but the poor thing was dead and perhaps *this* made his disgrace definitive. The curtains were open, the shades up, and he saw the leaves of the maple tree suddenly brighten to orange. Had nuclear devices exploded over Syracuse and a hundred other cities—the promised end, at long last? No: headlights. The girls coming home. He would let himself be caught, and that disgrace would set him free. But it was only a car passing by.

His first wife had been a nurse: this was back when such things were countenanced. Wide hips, full breasts, which turned out to have troublingly large aureoles, a fondness for old movie musicals and Dave Brubeck. She thought he looked like Dave Brubeck, and in those days, before Martine had urged laser eye surgery on him, he may well have. Andrea had had a bad habit (which he'd never called to her attention) of prefacing statements with "Truth to tell." He could no longer remember what they'd talked about, late in the night. She had stopped working when she began to show, and stayed home to raise Nathan, then Rebecca. Another age of the world. And, years later, the younger woman, the son hanging up the phone, the weeping daughter telling him she would never have a family. How could this, all so—"trite" was the word—have given any of them either pain or joy?

He had saved lives. At first he'd tried to keep count—could he ever have been that young?—but these were lives that any doctor could have saved. Once, when he was still in practice, he had emergency-room duty and they brought in a teen-age girl: some fool woman, a hairdresser of all things, had thought she knew how to perform an abortion—it was that long ago—and afterward he had put the girl on the Pill. Half a year later she came to him in his office, pregnant again; insanely, he had given in, risking not just the loss of his license but, in those days, a charge of murder. When the girl came to him one more time, he turned her away, and that same night—or so he'd taken to telling the story; it was really the following night—she died in the emergency room, of an overdose of Nembutal. Well, any doctor of his generation had such stories. She was a homely, overweight girl named Cheryl—Robinson, she had told him, but it was actually something else—with blackheads on her nose. She smelled. He had looked into it a little afterward; he had been that young. The parents were divorced, the mother had a boyfriend and what was then called a drinking problem, and had taken out an order of protection against the father. All three, apparently, had beaten the girl. Cheryl Robinson had been sixteen, ten years older than Rebecca. And now Rebecca was old enough to be her mother. Though apparently she had chosen to be no one's mother.

The night after Cheryl Robinson died, he had told Andrea that he'd had enough of practice and meant to teach full time. And he suggested that they adopt a child. "This *is* a turnaround," she said, and poured herself more wine. "So why did I get my tubes tied?" The next day—and it really *was* the next day—he made a date to get together with the receptionist who'd been flirting with him. Since she was married, too, there would be no complications.

Martine had been his sixth adventure, if that was the word: of this he had kept count. He'd been seated next to her at a dinner party when she'd first come to the university as an assistant professor, specializing in the Victorians. Did she not find them a little stodgy? "Everybody thinks that," she'd said. "The Victorians were hot hot hot. Of course, it was all encoded. You should come in when I teach 'Dover Beach.'"

"I warn you," he said, "I'm a hard sell." He saw Andrea looking at them from across the table.

"I'll sell you," she said.

"Another catalogue."

He sat in the back of her classroom among the undergraduates, who had stared at him when he came in, and listened as she lectured. "'Begin, and cease, and then again begin / With tremulous cadence slow'? I mean, what does this *sound* like, boys and girls?" Her black T-shirt fit so snugly that he could see the nipples of her small, unbound breasts.

"Intriguing," he said afterward, when they'd ordered their drinks. "But weren't you taking things somewhat out of context?"

"What *is* context?" She took off her narrow black-framed glasses and cleaned the lenses with the bottom of her T-shirt.

"Ah. Am I guilty of old thinking?"

"It's charming," she said. "It's *so* old it's transgressive."

"Then that's a good thing, yes?"

"I have an idea you don't transgress enough."

"You might be surprised," he said.

She put the glasses back on, and her face seemed prettier again. "Oh, I don't mean *that*. Of course, you have a reputation."

"Have I?"

"Or else I wouldn't be here with you. I *like* a woman-hater every once in a while. It might be fun to take your cherry."

"Well," he said. "If you think you're man enough."

There had been an ice storm the night before he was to go in for the last, most difficult extractions; he scraped away frost to look out the window and saw the bare trees silvery with sun. Apparently he had brought wood in last night, a kindness for which he was grateful. He opened the draft and built up a fire. His skin felt raw, as if he had a low-grade fever.

He swallowed a Dilaudid with his coffee and turned on the radio, to a secret station he had found: "music" that was simply noises and drumbeats, about guns and money and women, and where even an old man, provided he was by himself, was allowed to listen in on all the rich obscenity. Bitches on their knees, black men chanting about what the bitches must do.

He heard the bell ring and turned the radio off. When he opened the door, he felt the cruel air, and saw Karen, in her black leather jacket.

"It's cozy in here," she said. She unwrapped her red scarf, unzipped the jacket. A pretty and delicate young woman—a gamine, she would once have been called—with short black hair.

"Could I get you some coffee?"

"Maybe I'd better take it along? We should allow some extra time because of the roads. Actually, can we take your Jeep down to my car? The path is all ice."

"I still don't think it's necessary for anyone to drive me."

"They're going to put you under," she said. "This is not discussable."

He'd tried to research the interaction of Dilaudid and sodium pentathol. Not ideal, but probably all right. "Why don't I drive us there at least," he said. Her little Japanese putt-putt had only rear-wheel drive. "And you can drink your coffee. Can you drive a standard shift? Assuming it becomes necessary."

"All dykes can drive standard," she said. "It's in our DNA."

At the stop sign, he put on his turn signal, to take the shortcut. He crept down Breakneck Hill Road in first gear, steering from one patch of sand to another. His quietude was deepening now; the ice had bent the trees on either side, making the road look like a tunnel. When they came to the curve, he felt the Jeep become a heavy object gliding down, its back end sweeping to the left. He heard Karen yell "Shit!" But then the tires bit into sand, he cut the wheel, and the Jeep straightened out and resumed its crawl. In his old life, his heart would have begun pounding now in a delayed adrenaline reaction. He looked over and saw Karen using a Kleenex to mop coffee off the leg of her jeans.

In the waiting room, she sat next to him, a paperback copy of "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" in her lap. "You know, I never got around to reading that," he said.

"This is what made me want to go into neurology," she said. "I have to say, I'm loathing it this time. All this bogus *compassion*. And his bogus beard."

"Since when have you been so fierce?"

"Sorry," she said. "I'm just in a shitty mood. Let's worry about *you*."

"Ah, that's a young man's game. And what are you in a shitty mood about?"

"About half the time," she said. "See? You're not the only one who can be evasive."

PINK AND WHITE

Peonies are the only flower I care for
and when I saw them from the bus window
yesterday, tumbled and heavy along
a fence, fully exploded, nodding
at the ground, hanging their heads but not
yet spoiled, I remembered
a summer (maybe seven years
ago, or was it ten?) I wasn't sure
our love would come again,
and here I am, almost

kissing the grass like that,
bursting and rich, cracked
all over like broken cake—
makes you cry but still sweet.

—Deborah Garrison

As instructed, he had gone without breakfast; coming up out of the anesthesia, he vomited bile. On the way back out of town, Karen pulled into the quilted-metal diner on the bypass and helped him up the three steps. Really no need: they were dotted with ice-melting pellets, and he felt remarkably normal, considering where he had been.

Karen ate an omelette while he drank coffee and studied the map of Greece on his placemat: a country in the shape of a splatter. Islands called the Sporades? He had never heard of them. Must this not be where the word "sporadic" came from?

"You sure you don't want some rice pudding?" she said. "You wouldn't have to chew. You should eat something."

He shook his head.

"Here, take my jelly at least. You need to get your blood sugar up. We have apple, or—let's see. Grape."

"Ah. The Puritan or the Mediterranean. *This* will tell you something about me." He peeled back the seal on the tiny oblong tub and picked up his spoon. "Out, vile jelly!" It tasted sweet, but not of apple particularly. He swallowed without letting it linger in his mouth; he still didn't dare feel with his tongue where the teeth had been. "Martine and I were going to spend the summer in Crete."

"Do you know this is the first time I've heard you say her name?"

He put down his spoon. "Do you know," he said, "that you have a gift for making yourself offensive?"

"Donald, why are you being so ugly to me?"

"Perhaps that's my gift," he said.

Back in the passenger seat, the inside of the Jeep looked familiar but reversed, like a mirror world. Karen waited for a Sleepy's truck to pass, then pulled into traffic. "Listen, I want you to stay down at the house tonight. Gloria and I can take the guest room." She meant Rebecca's room; Nathan's had been redone as a study for Martine.

"Absolutely not," he said.

"Then I'll bring a sleeping bag up."

"This is foolish. I—watch out."

"I see him." She hit the horn at a minivan that seemed to be nosing into them from the left lane. "You don't even have a phone up there."

"For what purpose?" he said.

"I'll let you think about that." She shifted down to pass the Sleepy's truck. "God, I want one of these," she said. "It makes me feel like a real lezzie."

"Do you consider yourself not a real lesbian?"

"Well." She looked in the rearview mirror and swung back in front of the truck. "I've been with men. It's not the same."

"I've been with men," he said, "if it comes to that."

"You?"

"Well. *A* man. I found it just the same."

"When was this?"

"Oh, back when I was willing to try anything." He had told Karen only that he'd been beaten and robbed.

"So," she said. "This must explain why our bath salts keep running low. I was picturing you splashing around with some loose woman."

"That's a distasteful picture." What they'd done to his mouth was beginning to hurt. "Listen, I need to fill this prescription they gave me. I don't suppose you'd go into Rite Aid for me?" Little chance that they might accuse Kaspar Hauser of impersonating Donald Blakey to fill a prescription for codeine, but nevertheless.

"Of course." She put on the turn signal. "So who would have thought. No wonder we get along so well. Both galloping bisexuals."

"Hardly that," he said. "Unless you mean off into the sunset."

She pulled into the parking lot, and began prowling for a space. "Now I'm supposed to tell you you're not old," she said. "Aren't we tired of this dance?" She glanced over at the white-and-red Staples store. "You know, it used to be that all I had to do was see that logo and I'd feel myself blushing."

"That's a lovely stage," he said.

"Stage," she said. "That's a lovely word."

Neither Nathan nor Rebecca had come to his wedding; he'd thought they'd at least have been tempted by an August weekend on the Vineyard. At Martine's insistence, he invited them for Thanksgiving that year; it was Rebecca's first semester at Bryn Mawr and Nathan's junior year at U.C. Santa Cruz. Martine reserved a fresh-killed turkey, and made the dressing with truffles that had just come in to the market on University Avenue. The wine was a Sancerre that Martine had discovered at Vin Ordinaire, and that was now having a vogue among the faculty.

He and Nathan had spent the morning in the woods; Nathan felled five trees with the chainsaw, and they took turns cutting them up and splitting the logs with the maul. As the weak sun rose higher, Nathan took off his denim jacket, then his plaid shirt. He was broad across the chest and shoulders, narrow at the waist and hips; as he raised the maul high and brought it down again and again, sweat darkened his black T-shirt in an inverted triangle between his shoulder blades. It had been clear since Nathan was in seventh grade that he would never go to medical school. Now, as he looked at his son's strong body, this seemed perfectly right.

Late in the afternoon, the kids came downstairs flushed and red-eyed. Nathan, he saw, had not changed out of his bluejeans and sweaty T-shirt; you could smell his rank odor through the scent of roasting turkey. Rebecca slouched next to him at the far end of the sofa. Martine opened a second bottle of wine—they had killed the first before the kids made their appearance—and brought out a tray of roasted chestnuts. She extended it to Rebecca, who shook her head. Nathan took a handful and asked if they could watch what he called the "Macy's Day Parade." Martine gave him a look that would have quelled one of her students, but handed him the clicker and went to take the bird out of the oven. Nathan started going at the shell of a chestnut with his teeth, staring between his knees at giant balloons representing cartoon characters, floating above the streets of New York. Rebecca had got hold of the scalpel they used as a letter opener, and sat slicing parallel cuts into the flesh of a green olive.

Martine came back in with a third bottle of wine. She broke the cork, tried again, and had to force it down into the bottle with one leg of the nutcracker. "Ten minutes, boys and girls. Rebecca? Would you care for more wine?"

Rebecca looked up. "Would I *care* for it? I mean, what does that even *mean*?"

Nathan laughed. "Somebody's losing her shit. Listen, can me and Bec carve the turkey?"

"I suppose," Martine said. "I'm a little impaired myself. I'll show you where we keep the knives."

"Same place as always, right?" Nathan stood up. "In the knife thing? Come on, Bec. Bring your scalpel. You can give it a hysterectomy."

They went into the kitchen. Martine said, "I wish I had some."

"Some what?" he said.

"Oh, come on. Couldn't you smell it on them? Maybe they'd share a little."

"They're probably just ill at ease," he said. "I suspect Nathan has experimented some, as all—"

He heard a putt-putting noise out in the kitchen, guessed what it was, and burst through the door to see Nathan holding the chainsaw and Rebecca, index fingers pressed into her ears, laughing. Nathan revved the saw to a deafening snarl, white smoke belched into the room, the giant turkey twisted on the platter, then flew apart, splattering meat and stuffing onto the wall Martine had redone in blue milk paint.

Now the saw was idling again, and Martine was standing in the doorway. She walked over to the counter, set her wineglass down, and said, "You know, you're absolutely fucking right. We should just make this a performance piece." She picked up a severed drumstick and hurled it at the window, breaking a pane of the original glass whose waves and bubbles Andrea had particularly admired. Nathan stared at her, then shut the saw down. "Wait a second, wait a second," she said. "I've still got its *dick*." She reached into the garbage and came up with the turkey's neck, which she'd boiled along with the giblets to make the gravy, took it in her fist, and jammed it against the front of her black velveteen slacks. "Get down and suck it," she said to her husband.

Rebecca said, "I'm afraid." She began to weep. "Daddy?"

Martine let the turkey neck drop and put an arm around her shoulder. The greasy hand left a mark on Rebecca's silk blouse. "Sweetie, we're *all* afraid," she said. "Can we just agree that I'm shit and make this good for your father?"

After they'd all pitched in to clean up the mess, they called Domino's, and played Scrabble: Martine and Nathan against him and Rebecca. He put on "Sketches of Spain," and Nathan, Rebecca, and Martine sat on the sofa and

ADVERTISEMENT

Condé Nast Traveler
TRUTH IN TRAVEL
brings you

DAILY AND WEEKLY PRIZES
SPECIAL OFFERS
HOT NEWS
DESTINATIONS
TRAVEL PROPERTIES
FASHION
BEAUTY
TECHNOLOGY
AND MORE

cnt

cnt
Find it. Try it. Fly it.

smoked some of Nathan's marijuana; he sat in his leather armchair and put his hand up when the cigarette came his way. He watched the three of them get quiet. At one point, he thought he saw Martine put a hand on Nathan's thigh, but by then he had been sipping Cognac for hours.

The next day, he and Martine drove them to the train. They all agreed that they must do this again over Christmas. Martine hugged Rebecca, and Rebecca's hands hesitated, then rested on the back of Martine's coat. But something must have been said on the way to New York. Or perhaps visiting their mother restored their sense of perspective. At any rate, he saw Nathan and Rebecca again only at their college graduations and their weddings, from which Martine absented herself.

At Rebecca's wedding, in the cloisters at Bryn Mawr, he saw that Andrea had cut her hair and dyed the ends—there was a term for this. She'd got a desk job with UNICEF after burning out at Calvary Hospital. They sat with Nathan between them, and he noticed that she wasn't wearing a ring; Rebecca had told him that the marriage to the real-estate broker was in trouble.

He watched Rebecca and Giancarlo perform their waltz; Giancarlo was the better dancer, as Fred Astaire was said to be better than Ginger Rogers, though wasn't there now a revisionist view? He instructed himself to quell his mistrust: it was all those old movies in which American girls were pestered by European hand-kissers. This Giancarlo seemed solid enough: a visiting professor of economics at Wharton. What he'd wanted with an American college girl, however serious-minded—her dress put that on display for all the men to see.

The band struck up "I Won't Dance," which argued some wit, he thought. The floor filled up. He held out his hand to Andrea and she came to him, a kindness he did not deserve.

"Do you think they'll be happy?" he said.

"They're going to live in Rome," she said. "What's not to be happy?"

"And how are *you*?" He put his right hand on her waist (he could feel a stiff undergarment), and foxtrotted her toward the middle of the floor, the tips of her breasts brushing his jacket front.

"Truth to tell"—she showed teeth in what must have been meant as a smile—"I'm much better alone."

It had been dark for hours when he heard the bell ring down the path. *Damn* the woman. He was sipping Talisker, for the taste, really, and playing solitaire on his computer. He got up and opened the door: not Karen but Gloria, wearing a backpack and carrying a sausagelike nylon bag. "No," he said.

"Karen said you'd give me an argument. She got called in to the hospital."

"That's never good," he said. "You're welcome to come in for a *drink*."

"Except you're blocking the door. It's cold out here."

"Forgive me." He stepped aside. "I just didn't want there to be a misunderstanding."

She set the sleeping bag down, wriggled out of her backpack, and unzipped her down vest.

He fetched another glass.

"Here, I can get that." She took it from his hand and poured herself a couple of fingers, then added a dribble of water from the jug. "My husband used to drink Macallan. He said a little water brought out the nose."

"I didn't realize you'd been married. Have my chair."

"I'm O.K." She sat on the floor, her back against his bed. "Yeah, five years. Amazing, huh? My wedding dress was a size 6."

He poured himself another finger and sat back down in the Morris chair. He couldn't decide whether he liked her hoarse voice.

"So how's the mouth?" she said. "Karen tells me they went in with earthmovers."

"I don't think there's going to be a problem."

"Meaning there *is* a problem?"

The pain was still there, but at such a distance that it didn't seem to apply to him. "I mean that it's fine," he said.

"So are we going to fight about this?"

"About?"

"Me staying."

"I don't believe I have the energy," he said. "If you do stay, could I ask that you simply be here quietly? Without offense. I just don't feel up to carrying on a conversation."

"Don't worry about me, I have thick skin. Thick everything." She put a hand to her belly and made the flesh shake. He looked away.

"Make yourself comfortable," he said. "If you can. There are books here."

"I brought mine." She reached for her backpack. "Just tell me when it's lights-out."

After a while, he felt the room begin to cool and, as if she felt it, too—well, she did, of course—she got up and fed the stove. He clicked on Deal to start another game. The drugs he'd taken at six-thirty were wearing off, and he took another codeine for the pain, another Dilaudid—because he was addicted, he supposed, though it was hardly the desperate condition they wanted you to believe—and an Ambien to get to sleep. If he weren't careful, one of these mornings he would fail to wake up. (If he continued to be careful, then it would be some other morning.) He lost, clicked on Deal again, studied the array, then moved a red two onto a black three and dragged the king into the empty space.

He seemed to think someone had hold of his upper arm, guiding him toward what must be the bed. At one point someone had said, "Are you all right?" There had been a noise, some sort of disturbance. There was a connection among these things, or, if not a connection, at least a sequence. But such considerations existed far outside him, in the world of light and edges and face after face after face.

He opened his eyes and it was daylight, and wide Gloria had been replaced by narrow Karen, fitting a paper filter into the coffeemaker. His mouth was hurting; his back, too, as if he had thrown it out again. Could time possibly have gone backward, to that thing that had happened? But there was a rule against that. The cabin stank of whiskey. He closed his eyes and the negative afterimage of the window appeared, complete with the tree branches outside. He followed it, now here, now here, now here, until it faded, then opened his eyes and burned it in again.

He woke up, smelling coffee. He ran his tongue along his lower lip: it smarted, felt fat, and he tasted blood.

He woke up and Karen was sitting on the bed.

"Say again?" she said.

"What time is it?"

"Ten-thirty. So how much of this have you been taking?" She rattled the vial of Dilaudid in his face. "You scared the living shit out of Gloria."

"Where *is* Gloria?"

"Where she always is. Berating some stockboy." She got up and set the pills on the table. "Could you drink a little coffee?"

He turned on his side—what in God's name had he done to his back?—to fold the pillow double against the headboard and watched her fill a cup and pour in milk.

"Thank you." She had put sugar in, though somehow he hadn't seen her do it. "So. Am I being called to account for my sins?"

"I'm not the Puritan," she said. "You have a medical problem."

"Granting it's a problem. That's your assumption."

"I think Kaspar Hauser could validate my assumption. If we could reach him in the Black Forest."

"Ah, at least someone appreciates my little jokes."

"I'm surprised you haven't been busted," she said. "How stupid do you think people are?" She sat down on the bed. "Apparently you passed out and fell into your keyboard. And I guess you smacked the floor pretty hard. Let me see you." She rested a finger on his lower lip and pulled it down gently. He hissed in. "Not terrible," she said. "I made us oatmeal. In the microwave." Point of information, apparently. "You haven't been eating."

"I need to take something," he said. "I hurt everywhere."

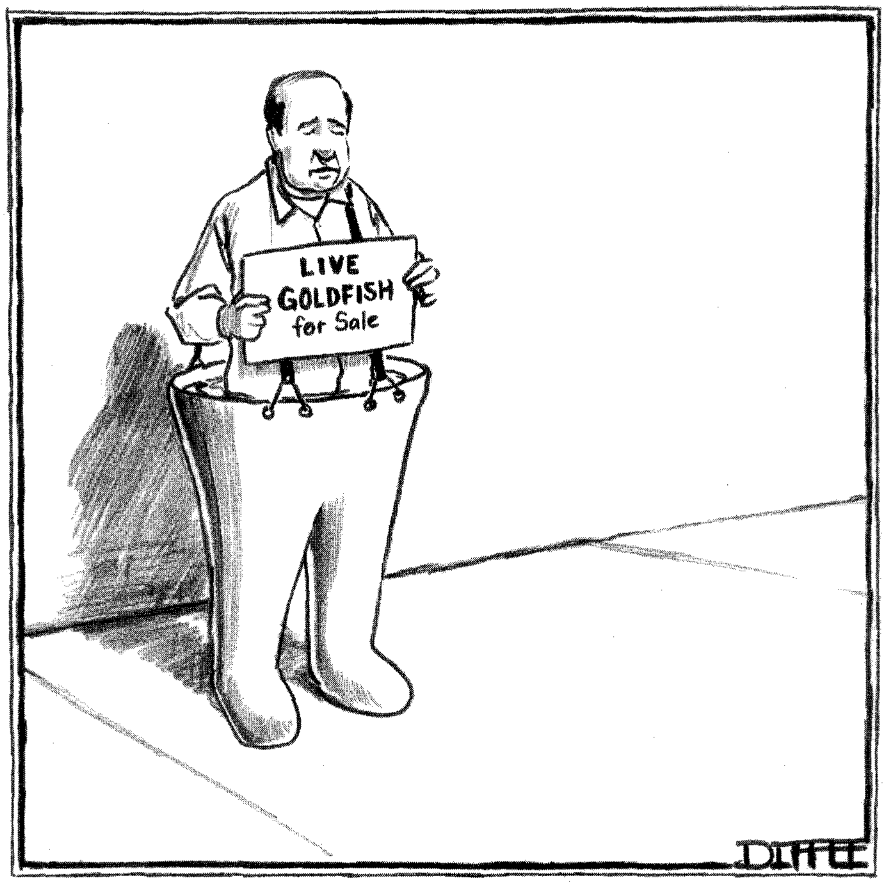
She shook her head. "Not on *my* watch. I don't doubt that you hurt. We're going to get you to someone who treats these things."

He worked his elbows to get himself sitting up. "Oh? By whose authority? I've had about enough of *you*, I can tell you that."

"You'll feel better," she said.

"You're damn right, I will. I want you out of my house. The both of you. You *and* your fat lesbian whatever-she-is."

She looked at him and got up off the bed. "Good," she said. "A little hon-



esty." She took her leather jacket off the peg. "I have to say, you were a wonderful teacher. Beyond that—I don't know, I guess I'm glad to know that there wasn't anything beyond that." She wound the scarf around her neck and put the vials of pills into her jacket pocket. "You have an appointment for one-forty-five. I'll give you some privacy to get yourself cleaned up."

Nathan flew in from Seattle, then back to attend to his Lexus dealership and be present for his son's sixth-grade graduation. Rebecca, coming in from Rome, missed Nathan by a day—the two of them hadn't seen each other for years—and stayed on, visiting for the half hour the rules allowed and sleeping out at the house, in her old room. She told him that the girls had moved their belongings out in a U-Haul. They'd been perfectly lovely to her, she said; the thin one had invited her to have coffee.

When he had got through the worst of it, Rebecca took him to have his bridgework completed, and on Thanksgiving night he was able to eat with her at Red Fish Blue Fish. She had the veal, and what she said was a good Pinot Grigio; he had the branzino, a fish once unknown, and was drinking mineral water for now. She was not going back to Italy, she told him. She and Giancarlo—but this probably wasn't the time.

"Come, come," he said. "I'm not such a delicate soul."

"No," she said. "No one's ever accused you of *that*."

"Ah. I take it you've been talking to your mother."

She nodded. "I'm going down when you—over Christmas."

"When I can be trusted by myself? Well, that should be a pleasant visit."

"Why are you so hateful about her? Because she still loves you?"

"You're not becoming one of those truth-tellers, I hope. I only meant that New York should be a welcome change from this outpost. Martine certainly found it so."

"She was a bitch," Rebecca said.

"*I* was the bitch," he said. "As they say. I'm afraid I must have liked it." He took a sip of his mineral water.

"Well, Daddy, look—you wouldn't consider coming with me? Mom says Joe Family might be there." This was her new name for Nathan.

"Thank you, no. I wouldn't have thought that you, of all people, would still entertain *that* fantasy."

She stared at him, the glass halfway to her mouth, then dropped her eyes. "I don't know why I keep being surprised."

"I'm sorry. As you say, I'm not a delicate soul."

She drained her glass and held it out to be filled. "Daddy, are you not even curious? About me and Giancarlo?"

"I was waiting for you to tell me." He lifted the half bottle, dripping, out of the—"humidor" was not the word—wiped it with the towel, and poured for her. "I had assumed you didn't want to talk about it."

"Fine, you're right," she said. "I don't want to talk about it." She took a sip. He noticed fine traceries at the corners of her eyes, and a single hard line slicing from each side of her nose to the corner of the mouth. These lines seemed to have been drawn onto the face of the true Rebecca, who had always looked young for her age—disturbingly so. "I think I'm going to apply to law school," she said. "Given all that's going on here."

"Bind up the nation's wounds?" he said.

"You can't just throw up your hands."

"Spoken like a woman who's spent the last ten years in sunny Italy."

"Yeah. Well. That's over." She picked up her glass again. "I was hoping maybe I could stay with you. While I get things figured out?"

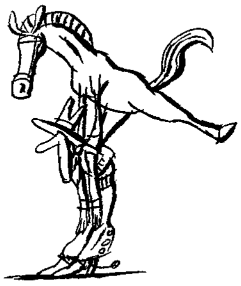
"And, meanwhile, keep an eye on me."

"Do you think you need that?"

"What a question," he said. "What am I supposed to say?"

"You could have said no. Should we talk about what *you're* going to do?"

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I've decided to go work in the inner city." He had been thinking about how to phrase this joke to make the meaning more precisely double, but it would do.



"Daddy, I think that would be wonderful for you. And the people you could help."

"The people I could help." He clinked his glass against hers. "Here's to them."

Without telling Rebecca, he wrote out a new will and faxed it to his lawyer. It left her the house and five acres, which included the barn and the tennis court; the other forty acres, with the pond and the cabin, went to Nathan; the money, fifty-fifty, to Rebecca and her mother, since Nathan had done so well. The Volvo should rightly have gone to Martine: he'd heard from Jack Stephenson that she had found only an adjunct position at Fordham, and she could have sold the car for the money, or kept it for the irony. But, since she had true love, there was no need for either. He directed that the car be sold, and the proceeds donated to Doctors Without Borders. He left the Jeep to Karen Friedman.

Rebecca was staying at the house with him for a few more days before going to New York. Through Jack, she had arranged for three L.P.N.s to come out in eight-hour shifts while she was gone. He was back in the king-size sleigh bed he had shared with Martine, which marked the place where he had shared the old double bed with Andrea. Each night after dinner, he and Karen—no, he and Rebecca—would play three games of Scrabble in front of the fireplace; they'd become evenly matched. Then, after trying to put himself under by puzzling out Shakespeare, he would swallow the one sleeping aid Rebecca allowed him: L-tryptophan, from the health-food store. The liquor cabinet, of course, she had emptied. One morning, when she went out to get the mail, he telephoned Rite Aid, but he was informed that his prescriptions could no longer be honored.

It snowed the night before he was to drive her to the train; they were calling for a foot or more. That afternoon he had gone out to the barn and uncovered the Volvo, the blue tarp spattered with the droppings of swallows. It had started right up, like the good Swedish car it was, and he had moved it out into the driveway to make loading her bags easier in the morning. He had thought of simply driving off, but to where, and what then? That night he lay there trying to decode the scene in "The Winter's Tale" where the wife is pretending to be a statue—the silliest part of a particularly silly play—then gave up, got out of bed, and went to the window. Snowflakes pouring straight down: he tried to follow this one, this one, this one, this one. White knife-edged crests had built up on the branches of the maple tree. He heard a roar that shook the house. It was only a section of accumulated snow sliding down the slate roof. But for an instant he had thought: *So this is how it ends.*

At some point, he heard the snowplow come through and saw its yellow blinkers light up the snowflakes. He awoke to the sandy scraping of a shovel down below: Rebecca clearing the walk. Daylight, and snow still falling. He smelled coffee. He had himself dressed when she clumped in, snow sticking to her green rubber boots. "I got a path dug out to the car," she said. "But shouldn't we take the Jeep? I don't know if the trains are even going to be running."

"I thought we ought to go in style," he said.

The snow was knee-high on either side of the path she'd made; he saw that she'd cut the sides down at an angle, the way he used to do it. When she was a child, still living here. He went out and started the Volvo, put the heat on full blast, then came back inside. "Be warm in ten minutes," he said.

She poured him a cup of coffee and turned on the radio. "Let's see if we can get the weather."

"It'll be fine." He tapped his forehead with his index finger. "My own secret station."

"That's half your problem right there," she said.

"I'd call that a conservative estimate," he said.

They slung her bags into the trunk. A couple more inches had fallen since the plow had come through, and the smooth white of the road showed only a single pair of tire tracks.

At the stop sign, the tracks went straight ahead; Breakneck Hill Road was a virgin slope. He put on his turn signal.

Rebecca looked over at him. "We're not going this way?"

"Save time," he said.

"We have lots of time," she said. "Do you want to get us killed?"

He jammed the shift lever into Park. "Would you care to drive?"

"I'd care to *live*, Daddy. Do you even have snow tires?"

"I've been a doctor for forty years," he said. "Do you think I don't know what I'm doing?" He closed his eyes and listened to the tick tick tick tick. "I'm sorry, Bunky." He turned off his signal. "We'll take the long way. It won't make that much difference." He pulled the lever back into Drive and started the car forward; it fishtailed, then righted itself. Snow blew straight across the windshield, from left to right.

"I must be hearing things," she said. "You haven't called me that since—you know."

He glanced over to see if she was crying. No. "Is it all right if I call you that?"

"As you say. It won't make that much difference." She reached over and patted his leg. "Sorry, Daddy. I'm just . . . Do you promise to take care of yourself while I'm gone?"

"Aren't we leaving that to the professionals?"

"I told you, right? Mrs. What's-her-name is going to meet us at the station and she'll follow you back to the house. Mrs. Biggs."

"Now there's something to look forward to." He had already taken his vow of silence: not a word to any of them. If they reported him, they reported him. He was a strange old man.

"You've always had women looking after you. So they're being paid."

"How it generally ends up," he said.

"And you're going to look into that volunteer work?"

"A Doctor Without Borders," he said. "Heal the sick, raise the dead."

"Always so modest."

"Yes, well," he said, "I can tell you a story about that." The wind had shifted now and was blowing snow straight at the windshield, like an attack from the stars. "This was back when I started out in practice," he said. "I had night duty in the emergency room and they brought in—"

"Daddy," she said, "I've heard this how many times?"

"Then I guess there's no need to drag it out," he said. An attack *of* the stars: he must not get focussed on this. "But you see where I'm going." ♦

ADVERTISEMENT

on the town

BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT EVENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND SPECIAL OFFERS FROM NEW YORKER ADVERTISERS.

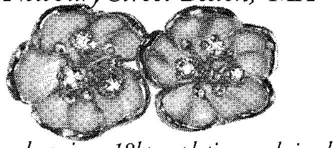
We're not going to rest until every single person finds love. Match.com has fifteen million members, even the one for you. No wonder we've inspired twice as many marriages as anyone else. Go ahead, meet that special someone today at the No. 1 site for love in the world. Match.com.

match.com

love is complicated. match is simple.™

John Lewis

97 Newbury Street Boston, MA



diamond earrings, 18kt or platinum, design by

1-800-266-4101 johnlewisinc.com Est. 1958 ©2005

NIFTY CROSSWORDS!

—Actually personalized all through!

An affectionate and gorgeous present.
First they solve it—then they keep it!
—Great for businesses, too.
(952) 925-2684 or loveland@mlecmn.net

TACONNET ON GREAT POND
Belgrade Lakes, Maine

Relaxing Family Vacations in a Unique & Beautiful Setting Since 1892
Comfortable Shorefront Cottages. Central Dining Room & Lodge. Tennis on 3 Har-Tru Courts. Swimming, Boating, Fishing. 15 Min. to Belgrade Lakes Golf Club.
Website: www.TaconnetOnGreatPond.com
Contact: info@TaconnetOnGreatPond.com
1 (800) 588-7024

Date Smart!

Date fellow graduates and faculty of the Ivies, Stanford Seven Sisters, U of Chicago and others.

800-988-5288
www.rightstuffdating.com

Advertisement

1 JOHN CHRISTIAN. Our Designers and Craftsmen individually create personalized masterpieces in gold and platinum. Perfect for Anniversaries, Weddings and Births! Fast three day service available. Free catalogue. 1-877-683-5100 x7001

ART & ANTIQUES

2 REPLACEMENTS, LTD. World's largest inventory of old and new china, crystal, silver, and collectibles. Over 200,000 patterns. Free pattern printout with prices. 1-877-683-5100 x7002

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

3 BEEHIVE FOUNDATION. Publisher of Savannah Revisited, a pictorial history, and Mills Lane's "classic series of Southern architecture books...from state to glorious state." —New York Times. 1-877-683-5100 x7003

4 DAEDALUS BOOKS. Thousands of books and CDs in all subjects and genres at much less than half-price. For the best browse in bargain books call for a free catalog. 1-877-683-5100 x7004

STONE SOUP MAGAZINE. "*The New Yorker* of the eight to thirteen set." *–Ms.* This beautiful children's magazine makes a great gift for budding writers and artists! $34, six issues. 1-877-683-5100 x7100

5 Please send me information on all advertisers in this category.

EDUCATION

6 STEWART HOME SCHOOL. Progressive education and a home community for the intellectually disabled child and adult on an 850-acre bluegrass campus. For information, write Stewart Home School, 4200 Lawrenceburg Road, Frankfort, KY 40601. 1-877-683-5100 x7006

HOME

7 CHEF'S CHOICE Model 120, a professional, three-stage knife sharpener with 100% diamond coated disks and a polishing stage, creates, in seconds, an unprecedented edge. 1-877-683-5100 x7007

8 InterfaceFLOR. Modular carpet tiles for your home. Think of it as simple, elegant, high performance design you walk on. Please visit us on-line.

9 Please send me information on all advertisers in this category.

TRAVEL

10 ARIZONA BILTMORE Resort & Spa. Celebrate spring in the beauty and warmth of the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa, the grand dame of Phoenix resorts. For reservations, please call or visit us on-line. 1-877-683-5100 x7010

11 ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM. Arizona is a land defined by wild beauty, simple openness, world-class resorts, culture, dining, golf & spas. Amaze Yourself—Explore Arizona. Free Travel Packet. 1-877-683-5100 x7011

12 BELGIUM. Rich in architecture, romantic canals, vibrant festivals, and incredible cuisine. Enjoy a good beer on a terrace with friendly people and savor the Essence of Europe in Belgium. 1-877-683-5100 x7012

13 BRITISH AIRWAYS. With 180-degree flat beds, a sense of privacy, and gracious British service, British Airways gives you a better sleep to London.

14 THE BROADMOOR. Come experience the restored elegance of The Broadmoor. We've added a million innovations, marrying the artistry and elegance of yesterday with the convenience of today. 1-877-683-5100 x7014

15 CLUB VOYAGES. Dalmatia & Turkey by private yacht. Explore islands of antiquity, largely undiscovered by Americans. Affordable yachts for couples and families. Friendly crew guide you to the sites ashore. Recommended by *Frommer's* and *Archaeology.* 1-877-683-5100 x7015

16 COCKTAIL PIANO The music you've been looking for. Beautiful solo piano recordings of standards by Gershwin, Porter, Arlen, Ellington, Carmichael, Rodgers & Hart, and others. 14 CDs from which to choose. 1-877-683-5100 x7016

17 FINLAND — KING'S ROAD. Experience this historic route, dating back to the 13th century, between the old northern capitals. For a King's Road tour contact us today! 1-877-683-5100 x7017

18 GREATER PHOENIX CVB. Discover the desert you never knew. Endless sunshine, outdoor adventure, relaxing resorts & spas, world-class dining & shopping, and great golf. 1-877-683-5100 x7018

19 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL Annual 4-day world class jazz festival. 100 major stars have been presented in the last 12 years. Winner of Hawaii Music Awards "Event of the Year" in 2004. 1-877-683-5100 x7019

READER SERVICE VALUE PROGRAM

AN INVITATION TO RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THE NEW YORKER'S ADVERTISERS

RSVP

To receive ***FREE*** information from our advertisers, simply complete this reply card and fax it to 888-847-6035 or visit us at www.tnyrsvp.com.

Or simply phone 877-683-5100 and enter the advertiser's extension located at the end of each product description on the RSVP pages.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

Name Address

City State Zip

Job Title Industry

Email Address

Was this issue addressed to you? ☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (2)

Occasionally, we may make our reader e-mail list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information via e-mail please check here. __ (3)
Offer expires July 4, 2005.

©2005 The Condé Nast Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. 032805

Advertisement

20 HAWAII VCB. From the crystal clear ocean and lush mountains to the award-winning golf and luxurious spas, let the temptations of Hawai'i surround you. 1-877-683-5100 x7020

21 HOLLAND AMERICA LINE'S elegant mid-sized ships offer an extra measure of personal comfort and classic seagoing excellence. 1-877-683-5100 x7021

22 HYATT REGENCY WAIKIKI. Experience paradise at this luxury resort on Waikiki Beach, featuring award-winning restaurants, Na Ho'ola spa, three-story shopping arcade, pool, free daily entertainment and friendly staff. 1-877-683-5100 x7022

23 KIAWAH ISLAND GREAT BEACH VACATIONS. Private, security-gated beach resort near historic Charleston. Free 32-page color *guide. Call our trip-planning concierge or surf* our Web guide today! 1-877-683-5100 x7023

24 LUFTHANSA. FlyNet®—the first wireless Internet in the sky. Lufthansa is the first airline to offer wireless Internet onboard – access e-mail, surf the web or log on to a corporate Intranet. Visit our web site for details.

25 MONACO. The Principality of Monaco, as grand as ever . . . and yet surprisingly affordable! Bid on exclusive packages at extraordinary rates at our on-line auction marketplace. 1-877-683-5100 x7025

26 OAHU VISITORS BUREAU. Oahu is the Heart of Hawai'i. Enjoy magnificent beaches and mountain trails, fabulous art museums, world-class cuisine, historic sites, spectacular sunsets, hula and aloha.

27 PETER DEILMANN CRUISES - MS Deutschland. 8-night cruise on-board the 500-passenger ocean liner MS Deutschland. Departing April 23, 2005 featuring low-cost airfare and more. 1-877-683-5100 x7027

28 PETER DEILMANN CRUISES - Riverships. Enchanting 7 to 14-night luxury cruises on Europe's most majestic rivers. Magnificent scenery. Pre-Post cruise stays. All-inclusive tours also available. 1-877-683-5100 x7028

29 PRINCE RESORTS HAWAII. Four luxurious oceanfront resorts on three Hawaiian islands, offering the perfect blend of exceptional service, exquisite cuisine and championship golf. 1-877-683-5100 x7029

30 QANTAS AIRWAYS. Fly the only business class bed to Australia. And we offer convenient connections from Los Angeles to Mumbai, Bali, Jakarta and Johannesburg via our Sydney hub.

31 STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS HAWAII. The Hawai'i luxury collection. Sheraton, Westin & W Hotels represent 13 resorts and hotels on the most beautiful beaches in the Islands of Aloha. 1-877-683-5100 x7031

32 THE GREAT STATE OF TEXAS. For your free Texas State Travel Guide with over 260 pages of information to help plan your next big vacation, visit us on-line.

33 TOURISM NEW BRUNSWICK. Experience the world's highest tides in New Brunswick, Canada in the Bay of Fundy. 1-877-683-5100 x7033

34 VISIT BRITAIN. Wales, England, London and Scotland - exciting experiences are never far away. Create Your Own Britain. Enter to win a trip to Britain today! 1-877-683-5100 x7034

35 THE WESTIN KIERLAND Resort & Spa offers 735 guestrooms, 63 suites and 32 casitas. Full-service spa, golf, exceptional dining, water park, and kids' club. Nearby upscale shopping. 1-877-683-5100 x7035

36 WIMCO Villa Vacations gives you access to the most desirable villas in the Caribbean, France, Italy, Mykonos and Morocco. 1-877-683-5100 x7036

37 Please send me information on all advertisers in this category.

Hawai'i

arts and culture

No one expresses the heart and soul of Hawai'i better than our local artists and musicians. Come experience the real Hawai'i this spring, when the Hawai'i Arts Season is in full bloom.

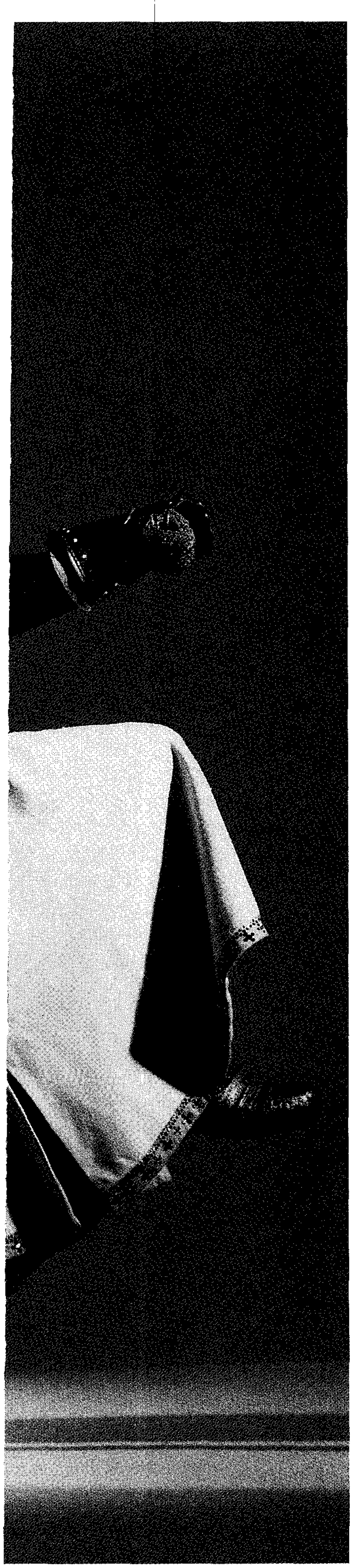
www.tnyrsvp.com

JOIN THE NEW YORKER MARKETING DEPARTMENT'S ONLINE FORUM

THE NEW YORKER COMPASS

www.newyorkercompass.com

"Spamalot"'s band of Merry-Andrews includes Michael McGrath, Jennifer Frankel, Ariel Reid, and Tim Curry, as King Arthu


hotograph by Dudley Reed.

THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

MARCH MADNESS

Monty Python takes on Broadway.

BY JOHN LAHR

Silliness is an assertion of youthfulness, a playful raspberry blown at everything that weighs us down—history, theology, psychology, and, especially, mortality. If you're looking for a theme to the inspired antics of "Spamalot" (at the Shubert)—a musical that is, according to the marquee, "lovingly ripped off" from the movie "Monty Python and the Holy Grail"—you'll find it on a twenty-five-dollar T-shirt that's for sale in the lobby: "I'M NOT DEAD YET . . .," it says. The catchphrase, which is intoned throughout the evening by plague-ridden corpses, by dragooned soldiers, and even by an amputee knight, is an impudent anthem of comedy: an act of defiance, not distraction. Caprice is hard, heroic work, and King Arthur (Tim Curry) speaks for zanies of every era when he sings, "For life is quite absurd, / And death's the final word. / You must always face the curtain with a bow!" In the absence of divine certainty, the director Mike Nichols and his deft assembly of Merry-Andrews have stage-managed their own act of grace, calling down from the heaven of their imaginations a taste of youth's eternal spring. "Spamalot" is a gambol, and no mistake.

The show is the brainchild of the former Python Eric Idle, who wrote the book and lyrics and shares musical credit with John Du Prez. The only other Python imported into the proceedings is John Cleese, who is present as the petulant and condescending voice of God—a role he was born to play. "I'm God, you stupid tit!" Cleese bellows from above, when explaining the Holy Grail. "Jesus! Now this shall be your quest." The Pythons, with the exception of the American Terry Gilliam, were all Oxbridge lads, university wits whose cavorting was a revenge on the constrictions of British middle-class life. Although their surreal impulse can be linked to other British entertainments of the time, such as "The Goon Show," the Pythons were intellectually more sophisticated than their predecessors—at once wildly slapstick and wildly referential, which was the essence of their humor. "Spamalot," like the film it's based on, knowingly spoofs the motifs of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English literature, among them the *perigrinatio* (the journey) and the courtly-love tradition. Courtly love made a myth of suffering without reward; "Spamalot" makes a myth of reward without suffering. Here, the only threat to life is the Killer Rabbit. (Be afraid. Be *very* afraid.)

The English in the audience will recognize—in the show's relentless punning, its sing-along, its summoning onstage of a "peasant" from the audience—the show's debt to British pantomime. The Americans will recognize—in the nods to Bob Fosse, Stephen Sondheim, and the arid slickness of romantic Broadway duets—their own musical tradition. But audience members would have to be from Mars not to recognize "Spamalot" as a smash hit. A response to the Broadway musical's overproduced and overfreighted attempts at significance, the show is literally a slap in the face with a wet fish. No sooner does the curtain rise on a map of divided England, 932 A.D., with a historian delivering, in pseudo newsreel hyperbole, a lesson on King Arthur and his gathering of the knights for a holy quest—"This man was Arthur, King of the Britons. For this was England!"—than we are in, well, Finland. Finnish folk dancers hop and bop each other with fish, singing, "Schlip schlap— / Schlip and schlap away . . . / You simply can't go wrong / In traditional fish-schlapping song." At the end of this bit of goofiness, the chorus concludes, "Finland, Finland, Finland / That's the country for me!" "I said *England!*" the historian growls. The chorus apologizes and slinks away. So much for the "integrated musical" and the "narrative arc"; we are in the land of no-holds-barred.

Nowhere in "Spamalot" is traditional stage naturalism more brilliantly spoofed than when King Arthur and his faithful servant, the well-named Patsy (the excellent Michael McGrath), first ride into view. The sound of horses' hooves precedes them. They enter horseless but prancing, with Patsy, coconut shells in hand, making clip-clop sounds behind the King. (Replica shells are available for sale in the lobby, so that audience members can do their own high-step around town.) Curry's droll King Arthur has a plummy, stentorian voice, a royal paunch, and a stolid, somewhat bewildered sense of command. "I am Arthur, King of the Britons," he says to Dennis Galahad's mother (Steve Rosen), who replies, "I didn't know we had a king. I thought we were an autonomous collective." When the Lady of the Lake brings in the Laker Girls to help the King recruit Dennis to the "very, very, very round table," the cheer turns hip-hop. Curry, with a trim goatee and deep-set spaniel eyes, strolls in front of the gaudy cheerleaders with a rapper's swagger. He knows that it's a hilarious sight, and it's all the more amusing because he doesn't push it. "Who de King!" he crows.

Broadway audiences are used to being tickled to death. "Spamalot" 's freewheeling, nonlinear style and wacky non sequiturs are exhilarating because they keep viewers on their toes. (Two Frenchmen inspect the Trojan Rabbit placed outside their castle. "*Qu'est-ce que c'est?*" one asks. "What?" replies the other.) Of course, there are ludicrous sights: a monk and an abbess doing an Apache dance, a cow thrown over a castle wall, and God's pink hand descending to the seat in the audience, which shall remain nameless—A-101—where the Grail is hidden. But "Spamalot" is at its most sublime when it's most infantile. Many of these scenes fall to the hilarious Hank Azaria, who appears in several roles, including that of Sir Lancelot, who "bats for the other team," as they sing in the big rumba-numba "His Name Is Lancelot." Tim Hatley's costumes provide an explosion of color and cuffs that swirls around Sir Lancelot as he is outed in song: "His name is Lancelot! / And in tight pants a lot / He likes to dance a lot." Azaria also plays the Taunter, who, from the parapets of his master's French castle, spews Rabelaisian invective at King Arthur and his crew: "I don't want to talk to you no more, you empty-headed animal-food-trough wipers! . . . I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries!" Azaria also appears on stilts, with reindeer horns on his helmet, as the eye-rolling, high-pitched Knight of Ni, who sets King Arthur's men an impossible task, only to change his name and his challenge. "We are now the Knights Who Say Ecky-ecky-ecky-ecky-f'tang-f'tang-boing-boing-ole biscuit barrel," he tells the bewildered men and assigns them the new challenge of getting a show on Broadway. "We don't stand a chance there," the cowardly Robin (David Hyde Pierce) says. "Broadway is a very special place, filled with very special people, people who can sing and dance often at the same time. They are a different people, a multi-talented people, a people who need people who are in many ways the luckiest people in the world."

"Spamalot" 's unrelenting visual and verbal sendup of Broadway banality is a tonic addition to the borrowed high jinks of the Python script. Although the show includes a medley of Idle's hit, "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," from "The Life of Brian," "You Won't Succeed on Broadway," gleefully sung by Pierce, is the only really first-rate musical number here. "You may bring on a piano / But they will not give a damn-o / If you don't have any Jews," he sings, as dancers reproduce the famous squatting-and-kicking stool dance from "Fiddler on the Roof," only here they slide toward us with chalices, not bottles, balanced on their heads. "There's a very small percentile / Who enjoy a dancing Gentile," Pierce adds. The audience howls. Python humor is skepticism in cap and bells, so it's only natural that Idle has no time for the romantic bombast of Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals, which he skewers neatly in "The Song That Goes Like This":

> A sentimental song
> That casts a magic spell
> They all will hum along
> We'll overact like hell . . .
> I'll sing it in your face
> While we both embrace
> And then we change the key!
> Now we're into E
> That's awfully high for me
> But everyone can see
> We should have stayed in D.

There are a few moments when hilarity and history collide and we smile at the stage with cold teeth. In order to annihilate the Killer Rabbit, the knights have to drop the Big One—the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch—on the furry, fanged thing. As Brother Maynard, Pierce reads with sidesplitting earnestness from the Book of Armaments: "And the Lord spake, saying: 'First, shalt thou take out the Holy Pin. Then, shalt thou count to three, no more, no less. Three shall be the number thou shalt count, and the number of the counting shalt be three.' "

"It is rarely in the world's history that its ideal has been one of joy," Oscar Wilde said. "The worship of pain has far more often dominated the world." No living American theatrical knows more about the making of joy than Mike Nichols. As the leader of this jesters' jamboree, he is all cunning and control. At the show's last beat, he lets confetti rain down like blessings upon us. Comic endeavor is not an easy one, and we should not receive it lightly. The vulgarity, the noise, the glorious, gossamer folderol are all a bold and fierce declaration of life. As the poet Jack Gilbert writes:

> We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure,
> but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have
> the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless
> furnace of this world. ♦

BOOKS

INCOMMENSURABILITY

A new biography of Kierkegaard.

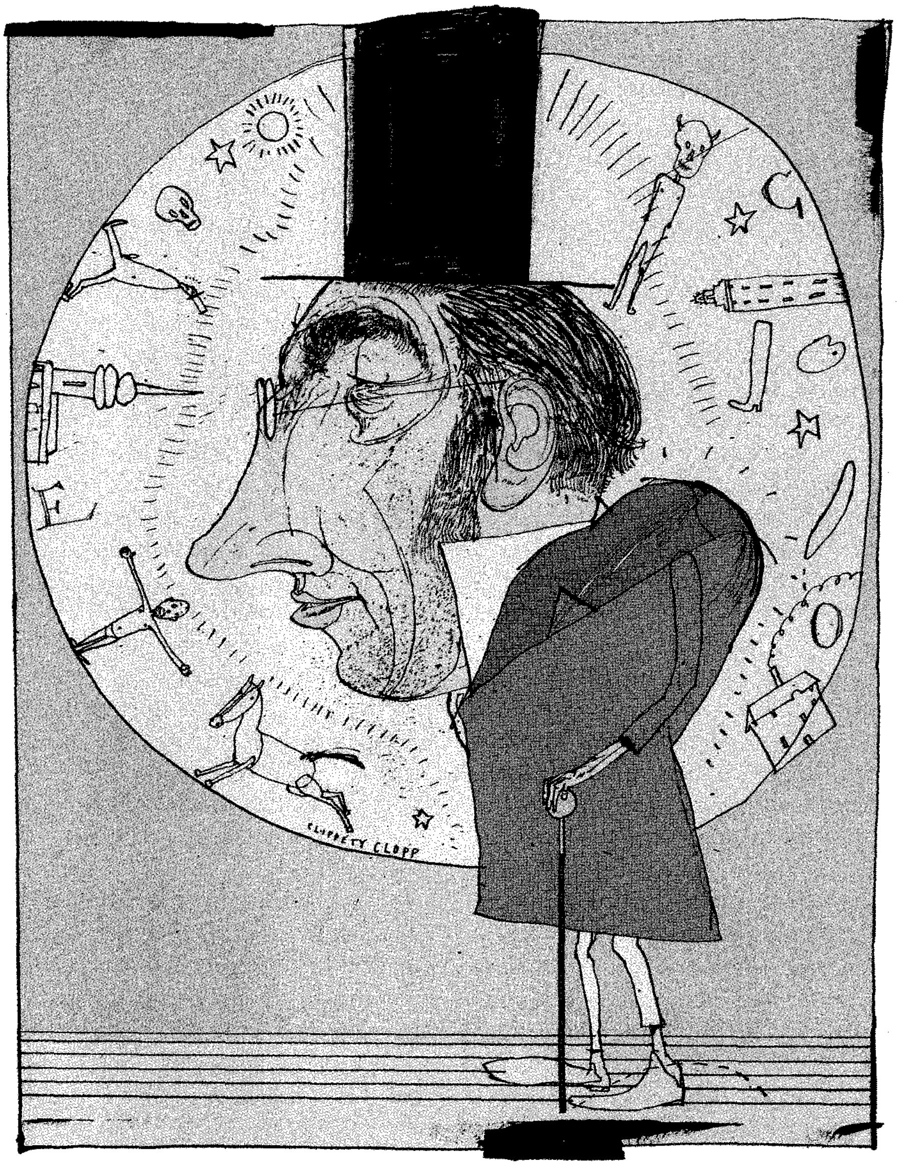
BY JOHN UPDIKE

Joakim Garff, an associate professor at the Søren Kierkegaard Research Center at the University of Copenhagen, in a brief preface to his monumental "Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography" (translated from the Danish by Bruce H. Kirmmse; Princeton; $35), states that "the Danish biographies of Kierkegaard that have appeared since Georg Brandes's critical portrait was published in 1877 can easily be counted on the fingers of one hand, and Johannes Hohlenberg's biography from 1940 is the most recent original work in the field." Garff's compendious yet lively work is undeniably a *Danish* biography; it assumes on the part of its readers a prior acquaintance with, say, the poetry of Adam Oehlenschläger and the intellectuality of King Christian VIII, a firm sense of what the rix-dollar could buy in the eighteen-forties, and a Copenhagener's inherent familiarity with the saga of his world-famous, locally notorious fellow-townsman Magister Søren Aabye Kierkegaard.

The Kierkegaardian tempest needed Copenhagen's teapot. In the years of the great Dane's short and not entirely unhappy life, from 1813 to 1855, Copenhagen still had its medieval walls and numbered about a hundred and twenty-five thousand residents—one resident for every three of this exhaustive tome's nearly four hundred thousand words. Kierkegaard was born in the little city and died there, and left Denmark only five times, once, on a day trip, to Sweden, and repeatedly to Berlin, where, after an initial sojourn spent attending lectures, he usually holed up in rented rooms and relentlessly wrote. Though he complained of "the costly amusement . . . of being an author in Denmark," he left a rapturous page of praise for the Danish language, "a language that understands jest fully as well as earnestness; a mother tongue that captivates its children with a chain that 'is easy to bear, yes, but hard to break!' " What he wrote about, in a dozen hectic years, under his own name and a welter of pseudonyms, was himself, a singular being tricked up in many alter egos and attacked from many angles, not only examined but cross-examined, an intricately guilty defendant on trial. One wonders if Kierkegaard could have found his existence so absorbingly important if he had been born into a larger city, where the edges of his ego might have frayed into the general fabric of indifference. A satirical caricature in the Copenhagen magazine *The Corsair*, published at the height of his local celebrity, shows him standing at the center of a revolving belt of stars, everyday objects, prominent Copenhagen structures, and the sun itself. The caption reads:

> There are moments when one's ideas become confused and one thinks that Nicolas Copernicus was a fool when he maintained that the earth revolved around the sun. On the contrary, the heavens, the sun, the planets, the earth, Europe, and Copenhagen revolve around Søren Kierkegaard, who stands silently in the center and does not even remove his hat for the honor being shown him.

This was no joke; Kierkegaard's great contribution to Western philosophy was to assert, or to reassert with Romantic urgency, that, subjectively speaking, each existence is the center of the uni-



The philosopher asserted that, subjectively, each existence is the center of the universe.

DAVID HUGHES

verse. He offered himself as a corrective to idealism, from Plato to Hegel:

> Now if we assume that abstract thought is the highest manifestation of human activity, it follows that philosophy and the philosophers proudly desert existence, leaving the rest of us to face the worst.

Garff's "labor of love," as he calls it, not only describes the claustral, interlaced coziness of Kierkegaard's milieu but partakes of it. Though assiduous in setting forth, year by year, in many short chapters, the facts, from the philosopher's Jutland ancestors and the variant spellings of his family name to the forlorn auction inventory of his bachelor estate, Garff has a voice of his own—an "informal style and conversational tone," to quote his translator. Garff's informal voice enlists us in the village gossip of Kierkegaard's time. Of his subject at the age of twenty-two, he tells us, "Everyone could see that Søren Aabye needed a change of atmosphere both mentally and physically. He had to get out of town." Johanne Luise Pätges, the wife of the influential littérateur and tastemaker Johan Ludvig Heiberg, is cattily described as "a goddess sprung from the proletariat, who at the age of thirteen had become the object of his distinguished erotic lust and who was now indisputably the leading lady of the Danish stage, the dazzling, bespangled muse of the age." When Kierkegaard, as a young divinity student, is introduced into the Heibergs' circle, we are assured that "the contrast between the pietistic Moravian moderation and simplicity of his family home and the delicate, crystalline sociability of the Heibergs must have been so glaring that it would have required an unusual effort for him merely to stay on his feet." Venturing deeper into Kierkegaard's head, Garff characterizes his older and more conventional brother Peter Christian as "Goody-goody Peter, Pusillanimous Peter, that conscientious and self-sacrificing person, who, however, was fundamentally a complete neurotic and unfit for life." Energetic metaphors animate disputes and rivalries among the long-dead: "While Møller"—Peder Ludvig Møller, a raffish literary rival—"had wasted his substance on the many bedsheets of Copenhagen, Kierkegaard gathered his own into his trusty silver pen, which released its contents with bold virtuosity onto sheets of paper that will survive even the forgetfulness of history." Or, in an even more aggressive metaphor, "Kierkegaard's critique of cultivation . . . has here been transformed into a theological torpedo that was guaranteed to collide with the monuments and shrines of cultural Protestantism."

Though some of Garff's metaphors and friendly interjections ("Hallo, Copenhagen!" he exclaims at one point) savor of loose words exchanged around a porcelain stove, his tone helps create a sense of excitement, of caring, of importance, of—locally and cosmically—scandal. The word "scandal" derives from the Greek *skándalon*, originally having the meaning of "trap" but coming in the New Testament to mean "cause of offense," and translated in the King James Version as "stumblingblock," as in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." To Paul's contemporaries and to Kierkegaard's, the scandal of Christian dogma (God incarnate crucified and risen from the dead) was something to be got around and built in, a stumbling block converted into the cornerstone of Christianity's humane, busy church. After Kierkegaard, to thinking Christians the scandal was of the essence—a confrontation, for "crisis theology," with the drastic otherness and unaccountability of God, on the far side of a leap of faith unaided by reason and propelled by human dread and despair. "Either/Or," the title of Kierkegaard's most popular work, posed, in two volumes, the situation: either the aesthetic, hedonistic, amorous life or the ethical, religious life. It was a bourgeois illusion, a blasphemy, to think that they were not incommensurable.

Kierkegaard's quiet life, occupied primarily in study and writing, was marked by four scandals. The first was not his own, though he made it his own. In February, 1846, he wrote in his journal:

> How terrible for the man who once, as a little boy watching sheep on the moors of Jutland, suffering terribly, hungry and weak from the cold, had stood atop a hill and had cursed God—and the man was unable to forget it when he was eighty-two years old.

Hans Peter Barfod, the devoted but somewhat cavalier editor of a multivolume set of selections titled "From Søren Kierkegaard's Posthumous Papers," in 1865 called this striking passage to the attention of Peter Christian Kierkegaard, by then a bishop in the Danish church. Peter exclaimed, "That is my father's story—and ours, too," and, according to Barfod, "recounted the details of the matter, which I ought not repeat here." Barfod never did confide the details to print, and, out of respect for the surviving brother's feelings, "couldn't find it in his heart" to include the passage in his edition of Søren Kierkegaard's papers. These writings, in notebooks and on stray scraps of paper, were often Kierkegaard's way of jotting down ideas for his unique mixture of philosophy, confession, and fiction; they should not be taken as literal autobiography. Yet it seems to be a fact that he and his father, who for all their differences "had important common ground in a few strange ideas," had discussed this shepherd boy's curse and deduced from it a divine curse that condemned the father to outlive all seven of his children. They were all, supposedly, destined to die before their thirty-fourth birthday, so as not to outlive Christ. Five—two brothers, three sisters—did so, but Peter surprised Søren by surviving his thirty-fourth birthday, and then the younger brother surprised himself by following suit, living to the age of forty-two. Peter lived too long; besieged by illness and religious scruples, he eventually resigned his bishopric and gave up his legal majority, assuming the legal status of a child, and died at the age of eighty-two.

Other calculations show that the father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard—who fled the hardships of Jutland at the age of eleven and, apprenticed in Copenhagen in his mother's brother's dry-goods shop, eventually became one of the city's wealthier merchants—impregnated his serving maid, Ane Sørensdatter Lund, well within the conventional year of mourning for his first wife, Kirstine, and married Ane less than five months before the birth of their first child, Maren Kirstine. Two more daughters and three sons followed, and finally Søren Aabye in 1813, when his father was fifty-six and his mother forty-five. Søren was thus living proof of an incorrigible concupiscence and, as such, an embarrassment to himself.

An undated and physically separate journal entry speaks of a "great earthquake" that led Søren to believe that his "father's advanced age was not a divine blessing, but rather a curse"; an early reader of Georg Brandes's biography asked Peter Christian outright if the father's revelation was sexual, having to do with "unfaithfulness to a spouse." The idea was indignantly dismissed; Garff, following up some shadowy hints in Søren's references to leprosy, suggests that the earthquake had to do with syphilis, a fatal taint passed on to the children. The Danish word for "original sin," the translator tells us in brackets, is *Arvesynden*, "inherited sin." This much seems clear: Michael Pedersen was a lusty youth and man, whereas Søren had a significant aversion to the physical side of sex. It is not clear whether or not he was a virgin. Some commentators have taken a mangled (by Barfod) journal entry, "My God, my God . . . the bestial sniggering," as evidence of a disastrous experience in a brothel; Garff rather doubts it.

The second scandal in Kierkegaard's life was his brusquely breaking off, in August of 1841, an eleven-month engagement to the eminently marriageable Regine Olsen. Like Kierkegaard, nine years her senior, she was the last of seven children of excellent family: her father, Terkild Olsen, was Councillor of State and a director in the Finance Ministry. The family was cultured—Regine painted miniatures—and religious, attending, like the Kierkegaards, meetings of the Moravian Congregation of Brethren. She was, by the slender accounts before Kierkegaard made her a figure in world literature, pretty and cheerful; there was nothing wrong with her. Garff says, almost impatiently, "She was just a lovely girl of the upper bourgeoisie who wanted to be happy, like everybody." In the version of Kierkegaard's farewell letter to her that has come down to us (in his book "Stages on Life's Way"), the key sentence reads, "Above all, forget the person who writes this; forgive a person who, whatever he might have been capable of, was incapable of making a girl happy."

Why was he incapable? For nearly a year he had been going through the motions, dining with her and her parents, arranging meetings and outings, sending letters and gifts. His executors returned her letters, which she burned, but twenty-six of his survive. These letters, according to Garff, show a marked improvement in Kierkegaard's literary art—too much so. "For by virtue of their indisputably aesthetic qualities, the letters make it clear that their author was to become not a husband but a writer." At the same time, he was busy in the pastoral seminary, judging the sermons of others, delivering his own, appearing to prepare, as his recently dead father had wished, for a respectable career in the ministry. His father's death, in 1838, had made him and Peter Christian, the only surviving children, heirs to a large estate, of a hundred and twenty-five thousand rix-dollars. Each received a quarter outright; the rest was placed in stocks and bonds generating income. Whatever his source of value in Regine's eyes, the jilted nineteen-year-old, in the words of the jilter, "fought like a lioness" to keep him, breaching decorum by invading his rooms upon receipt of his letter and, in his absence, leaving a "note of utter despair" that pleaded with him, for the sake of Jesus and the memory of his father, not to leave her. It was only two months later, in a face-to-face confrontation, that she accepted his defection: in Kierkegaard's version of the encounter, she removed from her bosom a "little note on which were some words from me" and slowly tore it to pieces, afterward stating quietly, "You have played a terrible game with me." Garff underlines the symbolism: "This little gesture was a decisive act: Regine freed herself from the writing; she had given up being a Regine of words on paper and had returned to reality."

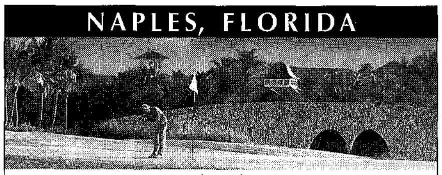
Two years later, returned to reality, she became engaged to Johan Frederik Schlegel, her girlhood tutor, whose courtship had been interrupted by Kierkegaard's intervention in her life. As a lawyer rising in government service, Schlegel was a very suitable husband: "practically the exact opposite of Kierkegaard: stable, harmonious, healthy, un-ironic, and patient." Kierkegaard continued to live in the world of words, pouring out convoluted, philosophically erudite, stylistically scintillat-

617.855.3570 pavilion@mclean.org www.mclean.harvard.edu

THE PAVILION
at McLean Hospital

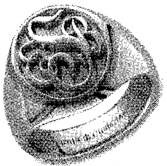
Unparalleled psychiatric evaluation and treatment.
Unsurpassed discretion and service.

Consistently ranked the nation's top psychiatric hospital, McLean is an affiliate of Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, and a member of Partners HealthCare.



NAPLES, FLORIDA

RESIDENCES FROM THE $400'S TO OVER $4 MILLION.
HOME SITES FROM THE $200'S. PHONE 1.866.267.3975
FIDDLERSCREEK.COM
Fiddler's Creek Realty, Inc. Void where prohibited by law including New York & New Jersey. Equal Housing Opportunity.



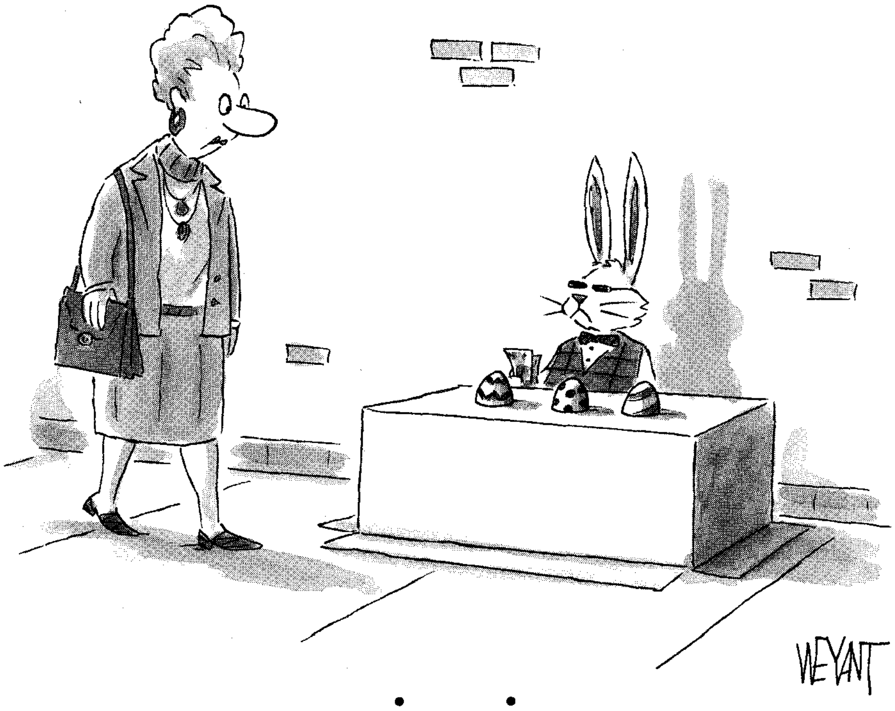
JOHN CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN
Raised Monogram
VIEW YOUR MONOGRAM ONLINE!
14K GOLD FROM $700 - 3 DAY RUSH AVAILABLE - FREE CATALOGUE
RINGBOX.COM 1-888-646-6466

ENGLAND IRELAND SCOTLAND WALES·
•Rental accommodations.
•Enchantingly rustic to simply elegant.
•Cottages, manor houses, castles.
•London and Dublin flats.
•Weekly or monthly.
As You Like It 415/380-9848 www.asyoulikeitrentals.com

SWIM BETTER NOW
Total Immersion SWIMMING™
We Guarantee It!
Call 800-609-7946 for free brochure or visit www.totalimmersion.net
Books, Videos, DVDs, Workshops Worldwide

AFRICA ◆ CHINA ◆ INDIA ◆ JAPAN ◆ NEPAL ◆ SRI LANKA ◆ TAIWAN
Since 1989
UPTON TEA IMPORTS
Purveyor of the World's Finest Teas
1-800-234-8327
www.uptontea.com
Free catalog listing over 380 varieties of garden-fresh, loose tea
34-A Hayden Rowe St. Hopkinton, MA 01748

mediate.com
got conflict?™
MEDIATE!



ing apologies and homages to Regine, their romance first transfigured in "The Seducer's Diary" portion of "Either/Or." The publication, in 1843, of this novelistic bundle of discourses, subtitled "A Fragment of Life" and pseudonymously signed "Victor Eremita," made a sensation in Copenhagen. An already established literary Dane, Hans Christian Andersen, who was in Paris at the time, was informed in a letter from Signe Læssøe, "A new literary comet . . . has soared in the heavens here. . . . It is so demonic that one reads and reads it. . . . I think that no book has caused such a stir with the reading public since Rousseau placed his 'Confessions' on the altar."

"If you marry, you will regret it; if you do not marry, you will also regret it," says "Either/Or." In his "Fear and Trembling," a passionate retelling of the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, Kierkegaard has Abraham seize Isaac by the throat and say, "Stupid boy, dost thou then suppose that I am thy father? I am an idolater. Dost thou suppose that this is God's bidding? No, it is my desire." To himself he says, "After all it is better for him to believe that I am a monster, rather than that he should lose faith in Thee." This accords with the view that Kierkegaard came to take of his rejection of Regine—it was for her own good that he act the villain, performing a "blackening of the breast" to wean her from him with her spirit unbroken. As late as the writing of "Repetition," in 1843, he was toying with the idea of reuniting with her; the announcement of her engagement to Schlegel caused him to revise the text, adding some misogyny. Yet the moment of their parting ("a very young girl, almost a mere child—the lovable tears of her misunderstanding") haunted his journals, and at his death he left the remnants of his drastically depleted fortune to her. Mrs. Schlegel, whose husband had become the governor of the Danish West Indies, rejected the bequest but, as a widow in Copenhagen as the nineteenth century wound down, she voiced reminiscences that "always began with Schlegel, whose excellent qualities she praised to the skies, but . . . always ended with—Kierkegaard." Neither she nor all of Kierkegaard's torrential comments, direct and indirect, upon the matter ever quite explained the breakup, which had outraged her family and titillated local society.

There had been signs during the engagement: he was fitfully neglectful, winning kittenish rebukes. According to Garff, at some point she "had been too erotically straightforward" and was primly reproached by the pious seminarian in a later letter of which a surviving draft reads, "I intend to give you a serious dressing-down because in your passion you once went beyond a certain boundary." He had confided enough unease to his brother so that Peter Christian noted in his journal that "after a long period of struggle and dejection, Søren broke off his connection with Miss Olsen." As Søren lay dying in Royal Frederik's Hospital, he talked to his disciple and confidant Emil Boesen, who faithfully visited and, ten years later, was persuaded to write an account of their conversations. One passage has Kierkegaard saying:

> "It's death. Pray for me that it comes quickly and easily. I am depressed. I have my thorn in the flesh, as did St. Paul, so I was unable to enter into ordinary relationships. I therefore concluded that it was my task to be extraordinary, which I then sought to carry out as best I could. I was a plaything of Governance, which cast me into play, and I was to be used. . . . And that was also what was wrong with my relationship to Regine. I had thought that it could be changed, but it couldn't, so I dissolved the relationship."

What was this "thorn in the flesh," to which Kierkegaard often alludes? The phrase is St. Paul's, in II Corinthians 12:7: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." Because his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, according to the description in Acts, threw him to the ground, it has been conjectured that Paul was an epileptic. Garff does some fascinating detective work in investigating the possibility of the "falling sickness" as Kierkegaard's shameful infirmity and the cause, as with Dostoyevsky, of his fits of exaltation and of his graphomania. A contemporary, Professor Frederik Christian Sibbern, recorded rumors of epilepsy, and in one known instance Kierkegaard abruptly fell down, but the most provocative clue is the hospital notation that the patient used *Valeriana officinalis*. Kierkegaard's physician, Oluf Lundt Bang, in his "Handbook for Therapy," wrote that "marriage must be discouraged" for persons suffering from a host of diseases, including epilepsy, and for that complaint prescribed "large doses of *rad. valerianæ*," valerian root. But, in the thorough records that Royal Frederik's Hospital kept during Kierkegaard's last forty-one days, no epileptic attack was mentioned. Garff spends less time on the possibility, raised in the far reaches of Kierkegaard studies, "that he might have been equipped with a curved penis, whose vaginal maneuverability would in all probability have been somewhat limited."

From the third besetting scandal, the assault of ridicule launched by the scurrilous journal *The Corsair* against not only Kierkegaard's ideas but his physical person, has descended to posterity the impression that the philosopher was conspicuously deformed. A series of caricatures in *The Corsair* by Peter Klæstrup show a swaybacked, even hunchbacked, figure with a sharp nose, tall hat, stick cane, and comically thin legs, whose trousers, more comically still, are of unequal length. It was this last oddity that the populace of Copenhagen fastened upon as the subject of gibes and taunts, making Kierkegaard's cherished daily perambulations in the streets a torment; he spoke of "that slow death, being trampled to death by a flock of geese." The characterization was witty, but the experience was painful, remembered in his journals long after it had subsided as analogous "to the gladiatorial animal combat of pagan times." If Christ were to return to the world, he wrote, "he would perhaps not be put to death, but would be ridiculed. This is martyrdom in the age of reason." Things got so bad that, in 1846, Kierkegaard's tailor, C. M. Künitzer, claimed that his reputation was enough affected by the fuss that Kierkegaard had better go elsewhere to have his trousers made. Detached observers felt that Kierkegaard—who had dared *The Corsair* to single him out—overreacted, compulsively talking of little else: a letter to Hans Christian Andersen reported that "the poor victim is not enough of a philosopher to ignore this annoyance, but is preoccupied with it day and night and talks about it with everyone." He had imagined himself a friend of the people, an aristocratic dandy engaging even the lowliest Copenhagener in conversation during his strolls. Now every schoolboy and ruffian called insults after him. His own nephew, Troels Frederik Lund, spotted his uncle on the street and was about to greet him when, as he remembered it,

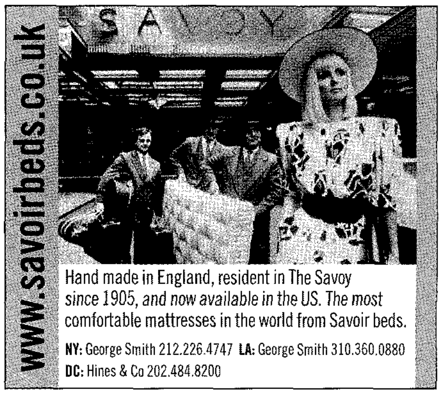
> at that moment I heard some passersby say something mocking about him and saw a couple of people on the other side of the street stop, turn around to look at him, and laugh. His one trouser leg really was shorter than the other, and I could now see for myself that he was odd-looking. I instinctively stopped, was embarrassed, and suddenly remembered that I had to go down another street.

It was as if the crowd had sniffed out Kierkegaard's own poor opinion of his body. By the eighteen-forties, he suffered from hemorrhoids and constipation, insomnia and dizziness, urinary difficulties and abdominal pains, and occasionally spat blood. His journal of 1845 exclaims, " 'A new horse!'—oh, would that the victorious health of my spirit might dare to cry out, 'A new horse, a new body!' " In the margin beside this notation he disdainfully clarified: "this sweat-soaked, stifling cloak of mush that is the body and the body's fatigue." In 1848, he noted, "In my youth my agony was frightful." He was given a physician's discharge from the Royal Life Guards after three days' service. He would not ride horses, fence, or dance.

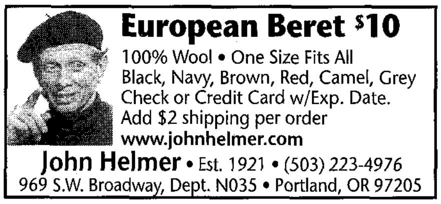
Yet two drawings of his head by his distant cousin Niels Christian Kierkegaard when Søren was in his late twenties show a romantically handsome youth. Regine found little fault with him; she recalled, "Yes, he was somewhat high-shouldered and his head tilted forward a bit, probably from all that reading and writing at his desk." (In curious bitter retrospect, her ex-fiancé confided to his journal, "She did not love my well-formed nose, nor my fine eyes, nor my small feet—nor my clever head—she just loved me, and yet she did not understand me.") The reminiscences of others mention Kierkegaard's "high shoulders, the restless, somewhat hopping gait," whose zigzags made him difficult to walk beside, and claim that his back was "a bit curved." The hospital examination soon after he was admitted recorded nothing abnormal about his spine. His enemy and admirer Aron Goldschmidt, the editor of *The Corsair*, left the most sensitive impressions of Kierkegaard's physical aspect:

> The shape of his body was striking, not really ugly, certainly not repulsive, but with something disharmonious, rather slight, and yet also weighty. . . . He went about like a thought that had got distracted at the very moment at which it was formed.

Goldschmidt remembered a friendly conversation, before the *Corsair* affair,


www.savoirbeds.co.uk
Hand made in England, resident in The Savoy since 1905, and now available in the US. The most comfortable mattresses in the world from Savoir beds.
NY: George Smith 212.226.4747 **LA:** George Smith 310.360.0880
DC: Hines & Co 202.484.8200

www.dallaspridgenjewelry.com
DALLAS PRIDGEN JEWELRY
One at a time, by hand
Stampede Bracelet *Sterling Silver $165 • 14K Gold $595*
Unconditionally guaranteed **1·800·477·1856**
PO Box 147 • Chapel Hill, NC 27514


European Beret $10
100% Wool • One Size Fits All
Black, Navy, Brown, Red, Camel, Grey
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $2 shipping per order
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N035 • Portland, OR 97205

Turkey ◆ Dalmatia
Explore islands of antiquity
by private yacht
Recommended by Archaeology & Frommer's
Club Voyages **888.842.2122**

10 Million Pieces!
China, Crystal, Silver, Collectibles
183,000 Patterns • Old/New • Buy/Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.®
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept YO
www.replacements.com®

Follow your dreams...
GALÁPAGOS
PERU
PATAGONIA
ANTARCTICA
TURKEY
ALASKA
INCA
since 1976
www.inca1.com
(510) 420-1550

STRUCTURE HOUSE™
a renowned facility and community for weight loss, diabetes management, and lifestyle change
www.structurehouse.com • 1.800.553.0052

in which Kierkegaard seemed to grow larger as he talked. He reported:

> There was a long pause, and he suddenly took a little hop and struck himself on the leg with his thin cane. . . . The movement was peculiar and seemed almost painful. . . . I am sure that there was something painful in it, something of the following sort: It was the fact that this learned, thin man wanted to be a part of the joys of life, but felt himself either unable or not permitted to do so.

No autopsy was performed on Kierkegaard's body, presumably by his own wish. This disappointed some medical students, who wanted to study his brain. The fact that he died at the age of forty-two would appear to substantiate some "thorn in the flesh," but Garff rules out tuberculosis and syphilis, two common killers of the era, and other diagnoses cannot be confirmed. "And when you get right down to it, what do the physiologist and the physician really know, then?" Kierkegaard had asked in his journals. The thorn in the flesh, one concludes by default, was a complaint of the spirit.

The humiliating *Corsair* affair, from this distance a tawdry and typical instance of provincial mentality cutting a local eminence down to size, worked in Kierkegaard like a religious poison. In 1848, he wrote, "Truly, I would never have succeeded in illuminating Christianity in the way that has been granted me, had all this not happened to me." A little later: "It has permitted me to experience the sort of isolation without which one does not discover Christianity. . . . No, no, one must in fact be acquainted with it from the ground up, one must be educated in the school of abuse." He spoke of his trials as "Christian experiences." By the mid-eighteen-fifties, his understanding of Christianity had been so radicalized that he proposed, "Christianity is the invention of Satan, calculated to make human beings unhappy."

The man once "incapable of making a girl happy" sees human unhappiness as intrinsic to traffic with God:

> What is absolutely the decisive factor is that Christianity is a heterogeneity, an incommensurability with the world, that it is irrational with respect to the world and with respect to being a human being in a straightforward sense. From my early years, I have winced at a thorn in the flesh, and to this was also connected a consciousness of guilt and sin. I have felt myself to be heterogeneous. This pain, my heterogeneity, I have understood as my relation to God.

His journals repeatedly cite the early pagan characterization of Christianity as *odium generis humani*, a hatred of everything human. Early in his development, at the age of twenty-two, he had already noted "the strange, suffocating atmosphere we encounter in Christianity," and that "in comparison to the pagans [Christians] are like a gelding compared to a stallion." He wrote that "becoming a Christian is like every radical cure: One puts it off as long as possible." Now he was ready, but at the price of loudly insisting on incommensurability and denouncing every worldly aspect of the Danish state church—its pomp and its bishops and the comfort it offered the comfortable bourgeoisie. He launched upon the fourth scandal of his life, the so-called attack on Christendom.

The attack was a counterattack, upon the geese. "The simple class of people, the common man [who had] been taught to laugh at me, thereby cutting themselves off from the one person in this country who has loved them most sincerely," are told in a storm of articles and privately financed pamphlets that they should shun church and the pastors, "these abominable people whose way of making a living is to prevent you from even becoming aware of what true Christianity is." And what are the rewards of becoming aware? "To become a Christian in the New Testament sense is such a radical transformation that, from a purely human perspective, one would have to say that it is the greatest tragedy for a family if one of its members becomes a Christian." The enemy of organized Christianity, who as late as 1847 had thought of becoming a country pastor, sought, and found, a kind of martyrdom. Hearing of his hospitalization, one citizen of Copenhagen speculated, "Most likely illness, nervous stress, and a sort of convulsive irritability have played a large role in his bitter and negative activities, during which he displayed to the entire world his face, marked as it was by hatred of humanity." The prominent church leader Nikolai Grundtvig denounced Kierkegaard as "the Father of Lies . . . who confuses his adherents with the appearance of clarity and with all sorts of brilliant delusions, but nevertheless kills everything human in them, leading them to the outer darkness."

Kierkegaard's father had been a follower of Grundtvig. Of the two Lutheran bishops who bore the brunt of Søren's assault, one, Jakob Peter Mynster, had been the father's confessor and the other, Hans Lassen Martensen, had been young Søren's tutor. The attack was a father-son affair, a repetition, in a sense, of the curse by the Jutland shepherd boy. It was a vomiting up of the gloomy religiosity that the father had worked upon the son:

> Oh, how frightful it is when I think for even a moment of the dark background of my life, right from the earliest days. The anxiety with which my father filled my soul, his own frightful melancholia, of many things in this connection that I cannot even write down. I acquired such anxiety about Christianity, and yet I felt myself strongly drawn toward it.

This was confided to his journals; in public writings, he instructed Christians, "Take an emetic. Come out of this halfway condition." A generation before Nietzsche, God was pronounced dead as a practical matter; theism so severely preached was hard to distinguish from atheism. The outer darkness that Grundtvig had evoked stood ready for Kierkegaard. The last entry in his journal reads, in part:

> This life's destiny is: to be brought to the highest degree of weariness with life. . . . I came into existence through a crime. I came into existence against God's will. The crime—which in a sense is not my crime, even though it makes me guilty in God's eyes—is to give life. The punishment fits the crime: to be deprived of all lust for life.

Human life itself is a *skándalon*. There was sophistry in Kierkegaard's attack, but also the fierce, nay-saying passion of Paul and Augustine. Garff's concretely local biography, big as it is, does not find space to speak of Kierkegaard in the world at large, after his death: his reputation's slow creep out of Denmark, by way of Germany; his influence on Kafka and Karl Barth and Unamuno and Sartre; his paternity of existentialism and Protestant neo-orthodoxy; the breath of new life he gave, however little he would have wished it, twentieth-century Christianity. Dying, having excoriated the established church and refused to take Communion from an ordained clergyman, he nevertheless reassured his comforter the pious Emil Boesen, who had asked if he believed in Christ and took refuge in Him, "Yes, of course, what else?" A person was either, by one of his formulations, lost in the "dizziness of abstract infinity" or saved "infinitely in the essentiality of the religious." ♦

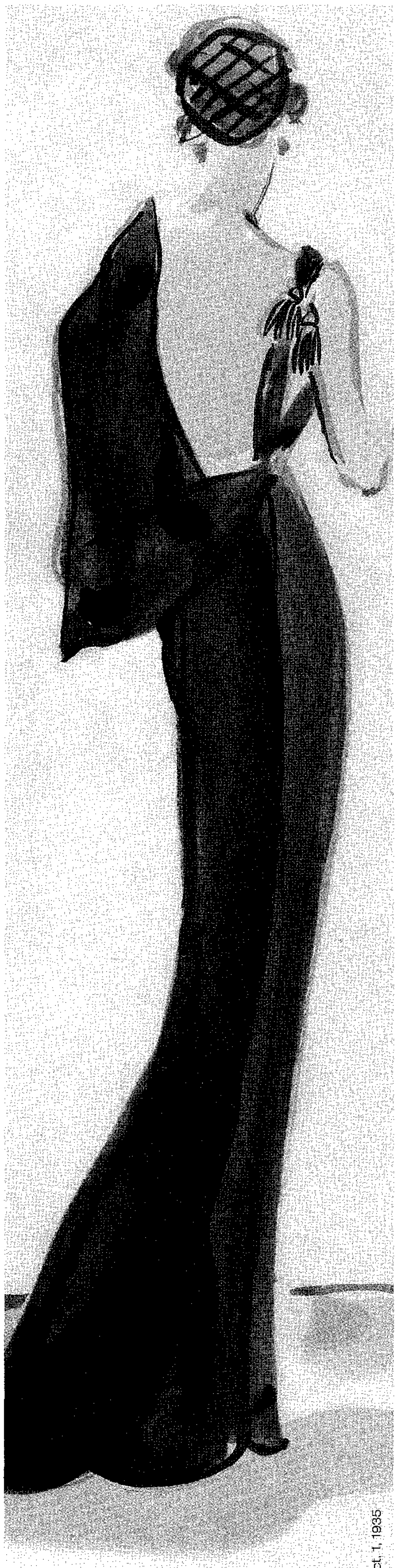
BRIEFLY NOTED

March, *by Geraldine Brooks (Viking; $24.95).* Brooks's novel of the Civil War opens in October, 1861, with Mr. March, a thirty-nine-year-old vegetarian preacher from Massachusetts—whom many readers will recognize as the largely absent father of Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women"—ministering to a beleaguered company of Union soldiers. The novel, expertly capturing the speech and attitudes of the time, forms an ingenious counterpoint to Alcott's. The narrative shifts back and forth between the war, where March takes a post as a teacher on a plantation for "contraband" slaves, and life in prewar Concord. This shift enables Brooks to juxtapose March's early commitment to the abolitionist cause—his youthful first kiss from a slave named Grace, his adult conversations with Emerson and Thoreau—with his experiences in wartime when this idealism is tested.

A Changed Man, *by Francine Prose (HarperCollins; $24.95).* One sun-spangled afternoon at a rave, Vincent Nolan, a palooka who may be the most hapless neo-Nazi on record (he's thrummed up his politics so that his unsavory cousin, Ray, will let him crash on his couch), has a conversion experience: things go all glowy, he sees the error of his nefarious ways, and, soon afterward, he's ascending to the Manhattan offices of the World Brotherhood Watch, to offer his services to its founder, Meyer Maslow. Clearly, Maslow is based on Elie Wiesel, though Prose tries to forestall this assumption by giving Wiesel a cameo role elsewhere. Vince is taken home by Maslow's mousy assistant, a harassed single mother, who manages to overlook the Waffen-S.S. tattoo and fall for him, and, at a benefit at the Met Museum, he becomes a poster boy for the P.C. set. As a sendup, the book is quite fun, but too often Prose's writing falls victim to the very earnestness that she satirizes.

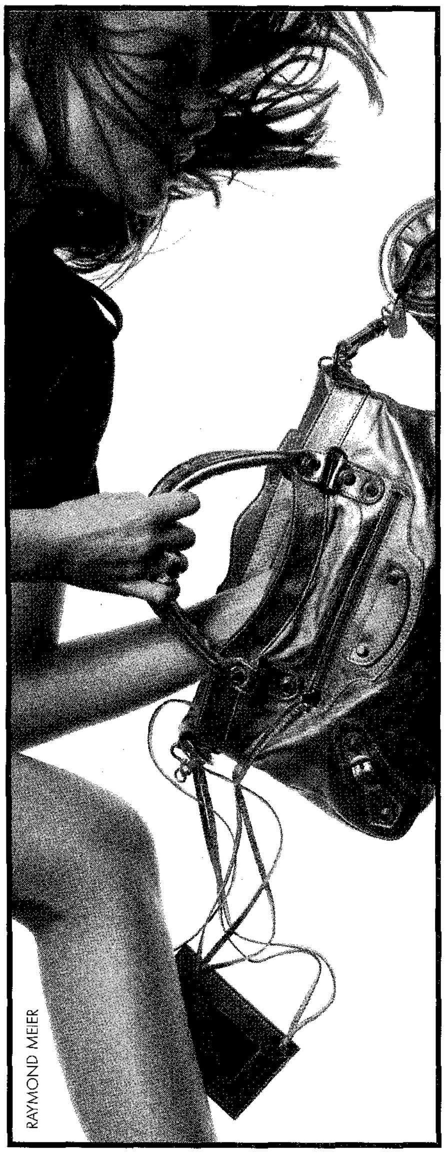
Imperial Reckoning, *by Caroline Elkins (Henry Holt; $27.50).* When the British left Kenya in 1963, they built bonfires and burned the meticulous records they kept. Most of these dealt with a period known as "the Emergency," when the colonial government attempted to stamp out the Mau Mau movement—an inchoate drive for "land and freedom," notorious for its machete killings—that arose among the Kikuyu, a hill-dwelling farming tribe and Kenya's largest ethnic group. Elkins, working in archives and travelling throughout Kenya, has undertaken an extraordinary act of historical recovery, to find out what the burned documents would have told us: the British, in their "civilizing mission" to pacify the colony, created a cruel system of detention centers, where interrogations often ended in death. With the moral fervor (and, occasionally, the overreachings) of a prosecutor, Elkins provides potent evidence of how a society warped by racism can descend into an almost casual inhumanity.

Fat Girl: A True Story, *by Judith Moore (Hudson Street; $21.95).* For Moore, who weighed a hundred and twelve pounds by the time she entered second grade, food was both her eternal enemy and her only solace; she was neglected or despised by almost everyone around her. "People said when I was a child that inside every fat person a thin person longed to pop out," she writes. "I did not believe that. I believed that inside every fat person was a hole the size of the world." But Moore is less concerned with the why of her childhood than with the whatness of it. As a result, much of this brief memoir reads like a sustained shriek of terror and need, stifled only by more food. It also documents, with a child's wretched matter-of-factness, the hatred that fatness provokes in others. The author's tormentors never get their comeuppance here, but for the rest of us—who inevitably divide into the contemptuous or the contemptible—there's plenty of shame to go around.



CONDÉ NAST ART
framed and matted prints
www.condenastART.com
or call 1-888-728-4021
FREE CATALOG AVAILABLE
Christian Berard Vogue Oct. 1, 1935

ADVERTISEMENT



RAYMOND MEIER

SEE IT.
CLICK IT.
GET IT.
WIN IT.

LOG ON FOR A CHANCE TO
WIN A $5,000 SHOPPING SPREE.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Must be at least 18 years of age and a legal U.S. resident to enter. Entries must be received by April 5, 2005. Subject to full rules posted on www.shopvogue.com.

shop
vogue
.com

BOOKS

SOMETHING ABOUT KATHY

Ishiguro's quasi-science-fiction novel.

BY LOUIS MENAND

Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go" (Knopf; $24) is a novel about a young woman named Kathy H., and her friendships with two schoolmates, Ruth and Tommy. The triangle is a standard one: Kathy is attracted to Tommy; Tommy gets involved with Ruth, who is also Kathy's best friend; Ruth knows that Tommy is really in love with Kathy; Kathy gets Tommy in the end, although they both realize that it is too late, and that they have missed their best years. Their lives are short; they know that they are doomed. So the small betrayal leaves an enormous wound. As is customary with Ishiguro, the narrator, Kathy, is ingenuous but keenly desirous of telling us how it was, the prose feels self-consciously stilted and banal, and the psychology is not deep. The central premise in this book is basically the same as that in the book that made Ishiguro famous, "The Remains of the Day" (1989): even when happiness is standing right in front of you, it's very hard to grasp. Probably you already suspected that.

It is always a puzzle to know where Ishiguro's true subject lies. The emotional situation in his novels is spelled out in meticulous, sometimes comically tedious detail, and the focus is entirely on the narrator's struggles to achieve clarity and contentment in an uncoöperative world. Ishiguro is expert at getting readers choked up over these struggles—even over the ludicrous self-deceptions of the butler in "The Remains of the Day," the hopeless Stevens. But he is also expert at arranging his figurines against shadowy and suggestive backdrops: post-Fascist Japan, in "A Pale View of Hills" (1982) and "An Artist of the Floating World" (1986); an unidentified Central European town undergoing an indeterminate cultural crisis, in "The Unconsoled" (1995); Shanghai at the time of the Sino-Japanese War, in "When We Were Orphans" (2000). It seems important to an understanding of "The Remains of the Day" that the man for whom Stevens once worked, Lord Darlington, was a Fascist sympathizer. But it is not particularly important to Stevens, who has no political wisdom, and who is, in any case, preoccupied with enforcing his own regimen of emotional repression.

The shadowy backdrop in "Never Let Me Go" is genetic engineering and associated technologies. Kathy tells her story in (the novel says) "England, late 1990s," so the book seems to belong to the same genre as Philip Roth's "The Plot Against America," counterfactual historical fiction. Conditions in this brave-new-world Britain, and exactly how Kathy and her friends fit into them, are all spooky authorial surprises, and (as is the case with most things) when you're reading the novel it is best to begin without too many prior assumptions. Kathy is a "carer"; her patients give "donations," occasionally as many as four. Inch by inch, the curtain is lifted, and we see what these terms mean and why the world is this way. The strangeness, like the strangeness in Ishiguro's most imaginative novel, "The Uncon-

Kazuo Ishiguro

PAUL HAMLYN

soled," is ingeniously evoked—by means of literal-minded accounts of things that don't quite add up—and teasing out the hidden story is the main pleasure of the book. In "The Unconsoled," the story is never fully sorted out; at the end, we remain in the hall of mirrors. Unfortunately, "Never Let Me Go" includes a carefully staged revelation scene, in which everything is, somewhat portentously, explained. It's a little Hollywood, and the elucidation is purchased at too high a price. The scene pushes the novel over into science fiction, and this is not, at heart, where it seems to want to be.

But where the novel does want to be is even less obvious than usual. Ishiguro is praised for his precision and his psychological acuity, and is compared to writers like Henry James and Jane Austen. In fact, he says that he dislikes James and Austen. He also says that he has never been able to get beyond the first volume of Proust; it's too dull. On the other hand, although his novels are self-consciously "set," they are not historical novels, and the facts don't seem to interest him very much. Ishiguro was born in Japan, but his parents moved to England with him when he was five. He cannot speak Japanese very well; he has not expressed any particular admiration for Japan or its culture; and he set his first two novels in Japan without revisiting the country. He appears to have done some research for "When We Were Orphans"; but in "Never Let Me Go," even after the secrets have been revealed, there are still a lot of holes in the story. This is not because things are meant to be opaque; it's because, apparently, genetic science isn't what the book is about.

Ishiguro does not write like a realist. He writes like someone impersonating a realist, and this is one reason for the peculiar fascination of his books. He is actually a fabulist and an ironist, and the writers he most resembles, under the genteel mask, are Kafka and Beckett. This is why the prose is always slightly overspecific. It's realism from an instruction manual: literal, thorough, determined to leave nothing out. But it has a vaguely irreal effect.

Beckett's subject, too, was happiness, and, though Ishiguro's characters seem so earnestly respectable, they have the same mad, compulsive, quasi-mechanical qualities that Beckett's do. There is something animatronic about them. They are simulators of humanness, figures engineered to pass as "real." What it means to be really human is always a problem for them. Can you just copy other people? Would that take care of it? "I have of course already devoted much time to developing my bantering skills," Stevens explains at the end of "The Remains of the Day," "but it is possible I have never previously approached the task with the commitment I might have done." Genetic engineering—the idea of human beings as products programmed to pick up "personhood skills"—is a perfect vehicle for a writer like Ishiguro.

For reasons that belong to the story's secret, the characters in "Never Let Me Go" all feel obliged to create works of art. Tommy is slower to develop creatively than his schoolmates, and when he starts to make drawings they are pictures of animals. He finally shows them to Kathy:

> I was taken aback at how densely detailed each one was. In fact, it took a moment to see they were animals at all. The first impression was like one you'd get if you took the back off a radio set: tiny canals, weaving tendons, miniature screws and wheels were all drawn with obsessive precision, and only when you held the page away could you see it was some kind of armadillo, say, or a bird. . . . For all their busy, metallic features, there was something sweet, even vulnerable about each of them.

The passage almost certainly derives from Henri Bergson's famous definition of comedy: the mechanical encrusted on the living. The creatures Tommy draws are imagined versions of himself. They are funny and pathetic at the same time, because people behaving like wind-up toys, even when they can't help it, even when it makes them fall down manholes, make us laugh. This is why Beckett is a comic writer, and it's why Ishiguro's novels, though filled with incidents of poignancy and disappointment and cruelty, are also, weirdly, funny. His sad characters can't help themselves. ♦

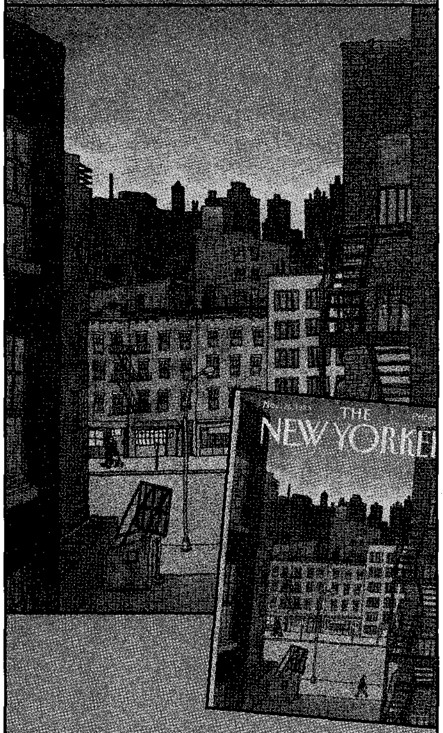
OUR AGNOSTIC POLICE

Headline in the Asbury Park (N.J.) Press.

SUSPECT'S TALE: GOD ORDERED
WOMEN SLAIN

AUTHORITIES ARE SKEPTICAL

FOR THE TRUE COLLECTOR
Original *New Yorker* Cover Art



"West Side Sunset"
by ROXIE MUNRO
The New Yorker, Nov. 25, 1985
ink and watercolor on paper
13 ¾" h x 10 ¼" w
Overall (with black metal frame): 24" x 20"
$9,000

You can view our entire collection of Original Cover and Cartoon Art online at
www.cartoonbank.com

To arrange for a personal viewing please call our Original Art Consultant, Anne Hall, at
(212) 286-5795.

CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company
1-800-897-TOON

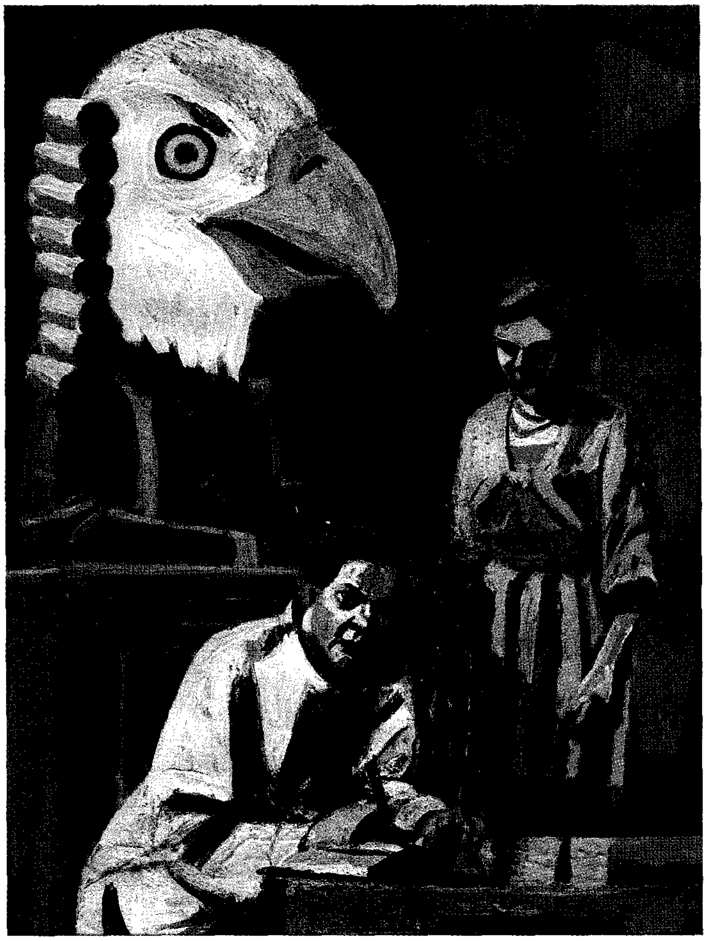
MUSICAL EVENTS

KAFKA SINGS

Two new operas: Ruders's "Kafka's Trial," Adamo's "Lysistrata."

BY ALEX ROSS

The Danish composer Poul Ruders is one of contemporary music's free agents—a lover of sweet melodies with a yen for dark chords, a comedian with a flair for apocalypse. His previous opera, "The Handmaid's Tale," made sonic thunder out of Margaret Atwood's novel of a dystopian America ruled by Christian fundamentalists. His major orchestral pieces—"Thus Saw Saint John," the "Solar Trilogy," a First Symphony subtitled "Rejoicing from the Heavens, Grieving Unto Death"—unfold hypnotically wayward narratives that reel from antic joy to frozen despair. (There are excellent recordings on the Bridge and Da Capo labels.) Ruders has a special knack for reinventing familiar tonal harmonies and styles; he uses them sometimes to mourn lost worlds, sometimes to suggest otherworldly innocence, sometimes to convey the banality of evil. All these devices are hurled at the audience in his latest work, "Kafka's Trial," which had its première on March 12th at the Royal Danish Theatre.



Composers are mysteriously drawn to Kafka's "The Trial."

ANDREA VENTURA

Composers are mysteriously drawn to "The Trial," Kafka's tale of a bank clerk randomly hounded by the Law. Perhaps, like poor Joseph K., they feel persecuted for no reason. Gottfried von Einem produced a straightforward, solemn adaptation in 1953. A decade later, Gunther Schuller, in "The Visitation," boldly transposed the action to black America. Ruders, in tune with modern times, makes the story all about sex and guilt. The libretto, by Paul Bentley, blends scenes from Kafka's life with scenes from the novel. The plot is framed by the author's crazed epistolary engagement to Felice Bauer, who, in July, 1914, convened a family tribunal in a Berlin hotel room to confront her fiancé with his neuroses. In the wake of that fiasco, Kafka wrote "The Trial." Bentley believes that Kafka considered himself guilty of misleading Bauer, and that the killing of Joseph K. at the end of the novel is a form of self-criticism. Kafka scholars may not buy that theory, but there's no harm in rewriting history if it makes for good theatre.

Alas, it doesn't. Ruders has said in interviews that he wanted to write a Kafka comedy, or, rather, a comic nightmare. The problem is that the material of both the novel and the life is, at best, morbidly amusing, and Ruders can't make it funny by force. The score has too many grotesque, wheezing episodes, too much infernal-machine music. The parodic touches are stale: klezmer references in the Kafka sections (the only sign of the writer's Jewishness), a groaningly obvious quotation from "Don Giovanni" ("Joseph K.! Joseph K.!," à la the Commendatore). Kafka's air of gnomic mystery, his Hebraic awe before the inexpressible, fades away. The climax of the novel is the chapter "In the Cathedral," where Joseph K. glimpses fate in all its hostile majesty. Ruders ordinarily thrives on gothic atmosphere—he once made a bone-chilling setting of Poe's "The City in the Sea"—but his cathedral scene feels strangely attenuated, as if he were afraid of losing comic momentum. The music acquires the right dark magic only at the end, when Felice confronts Kafka. Here, finally, is urgent word-setting over pungent chords, such as Ruders supplied throughout "The Handmaid's Tale." (Both Ruders operas, by the way, can be performed in English.)

I hesitate to render a final judgment on "Kafka's Trial," because the opera was hobbled by a spectacularly stupid production, which erased the distinction between real life and fiction and buried all the characters in an onslaught of puerile sexual imagery. Both Kafka and Joseph K. became idiots of id, desperate to try out every imaginable sexual act—anal, oral, you name it—with every woman who sauntered past. Watching it was like being trapped at a really gross Eurotrash orgy. There were also four Kafka doppelgängers wandering about the stage; at one point I thought they were about to get it on with each other, which might at least have brought us closer to Kafka's real sexual issues. Johnny van Hal soldiered bravely through the unsympathetic title role(s), but the standout in the cast was Gisela Stille, lending a warm, rich soprano to Felice.

The première took place at the Royal Danish Theatre's new opera house, on an island in the Copenhagen harbor. It is a sleek, cool, thoroughly Danish building, with bulbous glass walls and a severe overhanging roof. The acoustics are vivid, though lacking in focus and bass. From the look of things, the management wants opera to be racy, hip, not too deep. Coming next season is a world première by Elvis Costello.

At the beginning of the month, the Houston Grand Opera gave the first performance of Mark Adamo's "Lysistrata." Like "Kafka's Trial," it is an opera based on a familiar literary source, in this case the comedy by Aristophanes. And, as in the Ruders opera, a certain amount of creative violence is done to the original. Adamo wrote his own libretto, and he shows little interest in the political issues that have made "Lysistrata" a favorite of left-leaning theatre companies since the invasion of Iraq. In Aristophanes, the women of Athens and Sparta go on strike against the men of those two belligerent city-states, demanding that their endless war end. The "sex strike" still happens in Adamo's version, but it becomes the backdrop for the central drama of a relationship—the one between Lysia and the Athenian general Nico (a character that Adamo invented for the occasion). A brittle antiwar satire becomes a sumptuous love story, poised between comedy and heartbreak.

And it works. I can imagine a roomful of European progressives snarling at Adamo's bourgeois sensibility, but I relaxed a minute after the music began, knowing that I was in the hands of a brilliant theatre composer. Adamo's effortless expertise was on display in his 1998 maiden effort, "Little Women," alongside spells of cutesiness and clumsiness. He still indulges in cloying gestures—enough with the jokes in the supertitles!—but he has taken several big leaps forward, particularly in integrating his proudly tonal melodies with more dissonant connective material. Adamo's accompaniments would make a good primer for any young composer learning to write for and around singers. Each strand of the vocal line is punctuated by some perfect short gesture: cello pizzicatos and a smattering of harp; a four-note horn solo; a vaguely Balinese rustling of mallet percussion and string glissandos. The orchestral writing is often little more—or nothing less—than a play of light around the voices.

Act I is stocked with pratfalls and silliness. In Act II, the story takes a much more serious turn. Lovers on both sides fall into melancholy contemplation of the competing demands of private love and public life. The audience is invited to read "work" for "war" throughout. "Our will is not our will," sings Nico. "I am not my own," sings Lysia. Slow dotted rhythms, reminiscent of Britten in his ceremonial mode, give the music a sudden grandeur. As the cities work their way toward reconciliation, the women sing radiant, flowing chorales around the Greek word "*Evoe!*," the exclamation of praise in the Bacchanalia. At the end, the gods descend to warn the humans of their folly: "Never will it end. Never will it end. Time to time, it may suspend, but never will it end." The orchestra constructs a huge passacaglia based on intertwining downward scales, and the chorus gathers for one last chant of "*Evoe!*" It's almost shocking how deep this seemingly lighthearted opera goes.

The Houston production was on the ugly side, with cartoonish sets colored orange and bright blue. But it didn't sabotage the drama, as the Copenhagen production did. The singers were excellent: Victoria Livengood, Myrna Paris, Chad Shelton, and, especially, Emily Pulley, as Lysia, who mastered every nuance of the opera's wide emotional range. Opening night was a bittersweet occasion, for it was the last Houston première presided over by David Gockley, the company's visionary general director. Gockley has introduced thirty-three new works in about as many years, writing himself into musical history in the process: Adams's "Nixon in China," Meredith Monk's "ATLAS," and Bernstein's "A Quiet Place" came into being on his watch. Next year, he decamps to the San Francisco Opera. Too bad he isn't moving to New York. ♦

epicurious.com
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

IT MAY BE OUR BIRTHDAY, BUT YOU TAKE THE CAKE

Epicurious is turning 10, and to celebrate we're throwing a party for you! It's our way of saying thanks for making us the most award-winning food website.

Visit us all year to enter your own winning recipe in our reader recipe contest, vote on your favorite recipes, and enter to win one of hundreds of prizes.

Who says you can't have your cake and eat it, too?

Come celebrate and enter to win at www.epicurious.com/ten

Sponsored by:
KitchenAid
FOR THE WAY IT'S MADE
BERTOLLI

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.
MUST BE AT LEAST 21 YEARS OLD AS OF THE DATE OF ENTRY AND A LEGAL RESIDENT OF THE USA. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 12/31/05. VISIT WWW.EPICURIOUS.COM/TEN TO ENTER AND FOR FULL RULES

THE CURRENT CINEMA

REVENGE

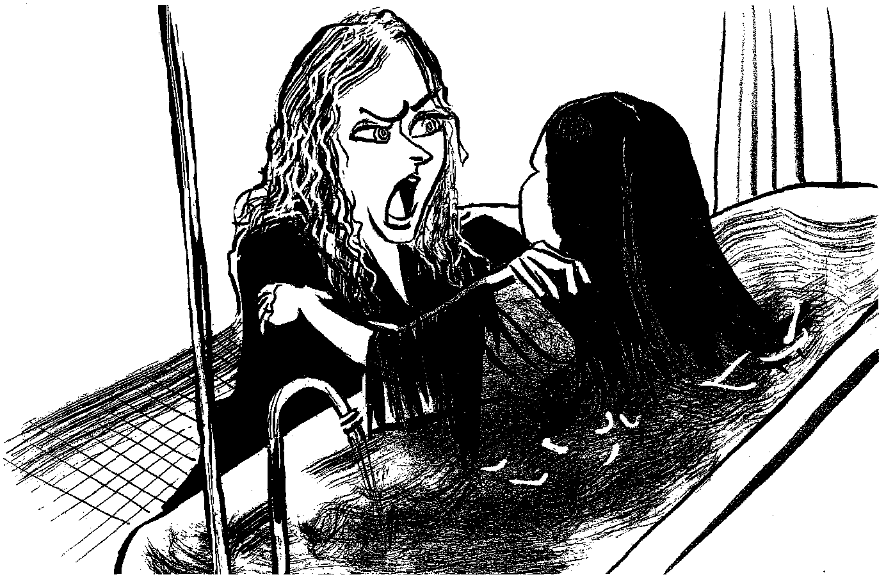
"The Ring Two" and "Oldboy."

BY ANTHONY LANE

A successful journalist and single mother, Rachel Keller (Naomi Watts), moves from Seattle to the small coastal town of Astoria, Oregon. She makes the change, accompanied by her young son, Aidan (David Dorfman), for all the usual reasons. One, because now is a good time to escape from the dripping, milk-white spectre of a woman that used to rise out of a dark well and freeze the Kellers' existence into a howling wasteland of intolerable fear; and, two, because we can all use a little downsizing.

What Rachel has forgotten is that she is in the grip of a sequel, entitled "The Ring Two," and that no ghost is going to be put off his or her stroke by anything as earthbound as a switch of zip code. The initial tribulations of the Kellers were displayed in "The Ring," directed by Gore Verbinski, which came out in 2002. This was the tale of a videotape, which, once viewed, caused the viewer to die within a week—six and a half days longer, by the way, than the time it took me to slip into a vegetative state after accidentally watching a tape of "Forrest Gump." The delicious twist of "The Ring" was that in order to break the curse you had to copy the tape before your week was up and pass it on to the next benighted sucker: a conceit that not only festers with epidemic potential but has the added, wholly gratifying bonus of causing all those industry police who wag their fingers at video piracy to stir and cry in their sleep.

Rachel saw the tape, copied it, survived, and in the process became an accomplished sleuth of the paranormal. The robed figure on the tape, its face concealed by a waterfall of black hair, was not, as audiences were led to suspect, an old bass player still grieving at being fired in the middle of a Black Sabbath tour but somebody named Samara, who was seeking apparently random revenge for her lonely death. And so to "The Ring Two," in which Samara (Kelly Stables), who can travel anywhere by cassette, pursues Rachel to Astoria and—the film is vague on this score—somehow worms her way into the body of Aidan. He still resembles a normal kid, if by "normal" one means staggeringly weird and steady-eyed, like every child in every other American horror flick, but his temperature drops to icebox level, his soul turns brutish, and the doctors at the local hospital, who miss nothing, are very slightly concerned by the burnlike claw marks all over his back and wrist. In the end, Rachel is left with an ancient, not to say Biblical, dilemma: she must kill her child in order to save his life.



Naomi Watts as a journalist and Kelly Stables as the evil spirit who pursues her.

TOM BACHTELL

"The Ring Two" is a perplexing compound of the silly and the glum. Take the scene in which the Kellers' Volkswagen is publicly molested by a herd of deer on an empty road. If this is honest product placement, advising VW drivers everywhere precisely what to do when you get an antler trapped in your wipers, fair enough; if, on the other hand, it was intended to portray a visitation from the spirit world, it deserves to be treated like any other stag party and laughed off-screen. Other sequences, similarly designed to brim with malevolent intent, come and go, leaving little but the nose-wrinkling smell of red herring. At one point, Rachel visits an institution to meet a madwoman, whose task is to unveil the secret of Samara's past; she is played, in something of a casting coup, by Sissy Spacek, who sits there crooning and cutting out paper shapes, but I was far too spooked by the fact that she was allowed to play with scissors to care, or even notice, what that secret might be. If anything, I would prefer that it remain hidden, on the principle that the gleam of evil tends to be rusted and wrecked by too prolonged an exposure to the powers of elucidation.

Hitchcock saw that. He was the Man Who Knew That We Must Not Know Too Much. From time to time, he lapsed (hence the dreary five minutes at the tail end of "Psycho," with a shrink rabbiting on about split personalities), but when on form he conjured up the remorselessness of "The Birds," which pecks at our nerves all the more cruelly for being unexplained. The peculiar thing is that Hideo Nakata, who directed "The Ring Two," has until now followed Hitchcock's trail with a fine aplomb, but only sporadically does this movie show his touch. What matters is that he has directed it before, and with a far more threatening grace. For it was he who made the first "Ring" ("Ringu," in the original Japanese), back in 1998, and followed it a year later with "Ringu 2"—

both of them international hits, snapped up for remakes here, and drenched in the Nakata style. There was the jungly, almost unwatchable sense of something being forever about to spring; there was the tautened use of music, so economical as to border on the mean; there was the nagging ubiquity of unhappy families; and, above all, where you looked in vain for blood, there was only water. Water, water everywhere, both life-giver and lung-filling wave. Nakata gets more out of a single dripping tap than the "Scream" trilogy got out of a dozen sliced teen-agers, and in 2002, as if to prove that his inspiration had not dried up, he released a petrifying vision of a haunted apartment building with the title of, yes, "Dark Water."

That, too, is under Hollywood rehash. I hold out hope, but not much. "The Ring Two" settles and half domesticates its terrors, leading us to neat conclusions where the Japanese originals hung fire. Characters say things to one another like "I know it's a stressful time for you," thus carefully replacing the old, stormy air of premonition with the cuteness of personal issues. There are special effects, needless to say, which were unavailable to the Nakata of old, but does he really need them? I was suitably amazed at the sight of Aidan sitting in the bathtub with the water flying upward and spraying off the ceiling, as if he were a mini-Moses parting his private sea, but amazement tends to dilute the intensity of the story, and there is nothing in the new film to rival the quick, climactic shot of the first "Ringu"—a lone eye, gazing out through the curtain of the ghost's hair, moon-white save for a curve of black pupil at the bottom, like an eclipse. Such was the transfixing deal that was struck by Hideo Nakata, and that he has not been able to repeat: we were watching the dead, and the dead were watching us right back.

Made in South Korea, "Oldboy" has been causing a fuss since it won the Grand Prix at Cannes, and finally it arrives here, trailing clouds of octopus. A man named Oh Dae-su (Choi Min-sik) goes to a restaurant and orders "a living thing." You or I would be content with a dozen oysters, but this fellow is handed an octopus on a plate, and he boldly goes for the complete eight-track experience, slotting the unfortunate creature into his mouth. It squirms around, looking understandably surprised by the experience, and one of its tentacles appears to be signalling for a cell phone, but down it goes.

This struck me as one of the better moments in the movie, and nothing that Russell Crowe, say, couldn't handle in the event of an American version. (Has anybody green-lit such a project? Let's hope so, if only for the solemn caution that we can expect in the end credits: "No cephalopods were chewed in the making of this film.") The point about Oh Dae-su is that he has been locked in one room—not a prison cell but a sealed chamber, just for him—for fifteen years, and can thus be forgiven if his appetite for life, upon release from captivity, has stretched to new and glistening extremes. Indeed, so grateful is he for his mobile meal that he falls in love with the female sushi chef who served it. Together, they embark on a quest to find his anonymous jailer and wreak appropriate vengeance. When I tell you that their hunt includes an involuntary dental extraction, you will gather how seriously they take it.

The film, directed by Park Chan-wook, has a gamy, ill-lit seediness, and nobody could accuse it of being slapdash; the endless fight in a long corridor, in which our hero leaves a horde of assailants broken and groaning in pain, is presided over by a camera that travels with unhindered calm, and the result is a kind of animated Géricault. But "Oldboy" has the fatal air of wanting so desperately to be a cult movie that it forgets to present itself as a coherent one. Sample dialogue, in voice-over: "If you stand outside a phone box on a rainy night and meet a man with a violet umbrella, my advice is that you make friends with the television." What? We lurch and tilt from one train of thought to another, and the director is under the impression that if you stitch together enough gestures, either coolly subdued or egregiously violent, you will wind up with a rounded character. (That makes him a decadent descendant of the French New Wave; no wonder he went over big at Cannes.) Toward the end, there is a furtive and tender love scene, entailing the imaginative use of a hand mirror, but it feels suspended in the void of a frantic film, no more purposeful than an outtake. As to the reason for the incarceration, it all boils down to something that happened long ago, in high school, and that deserved at most a bloody nose. Instead, our man gets fifteen years' solitary and what is known in legal circles as a squid pro quo. I knew the politics of the playground was hot stuff, but has it really come to this? ♦

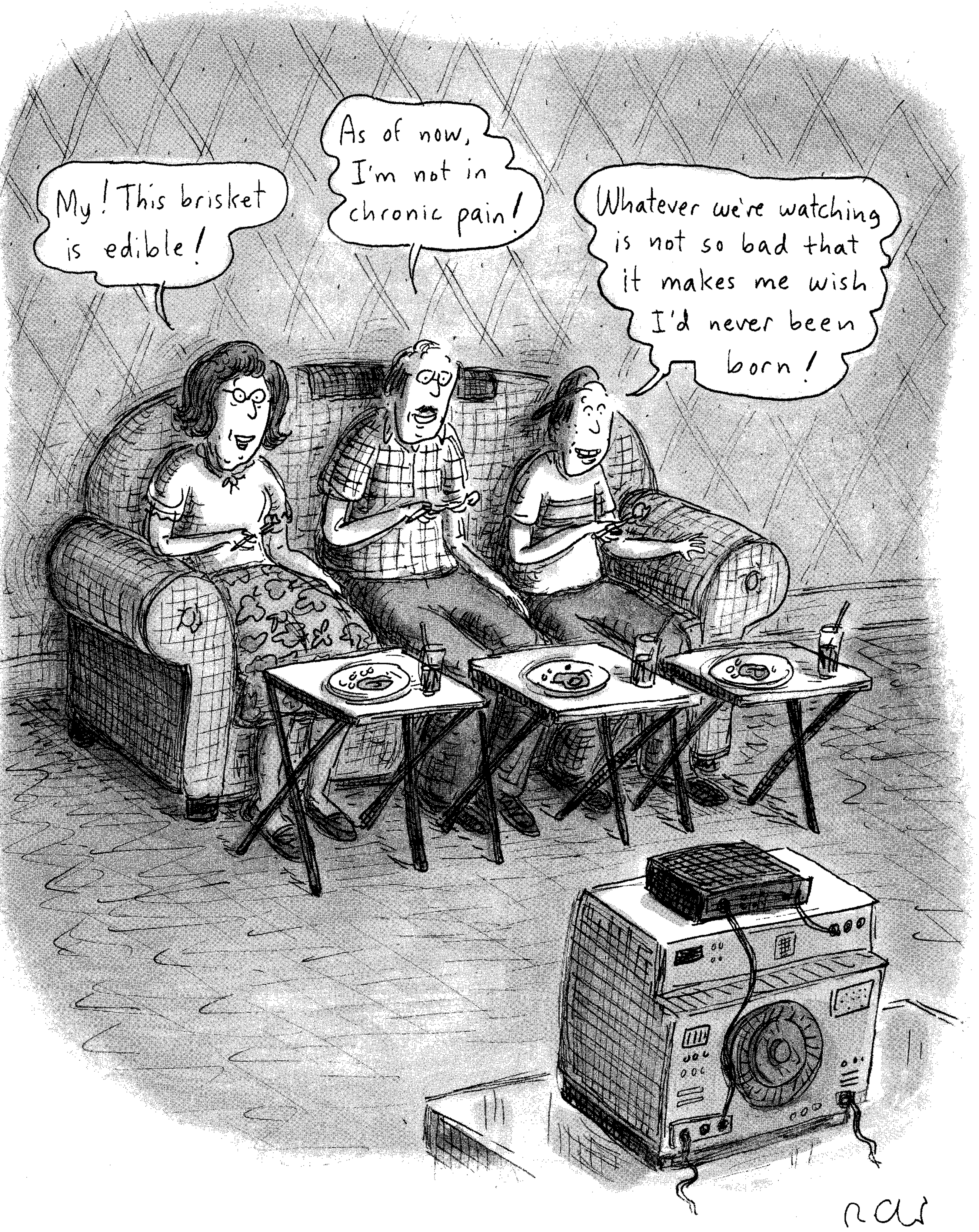
THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC., PUBLISHED THROUGH ITS DIVISION THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. COPYRIGHT ©2005 THE CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

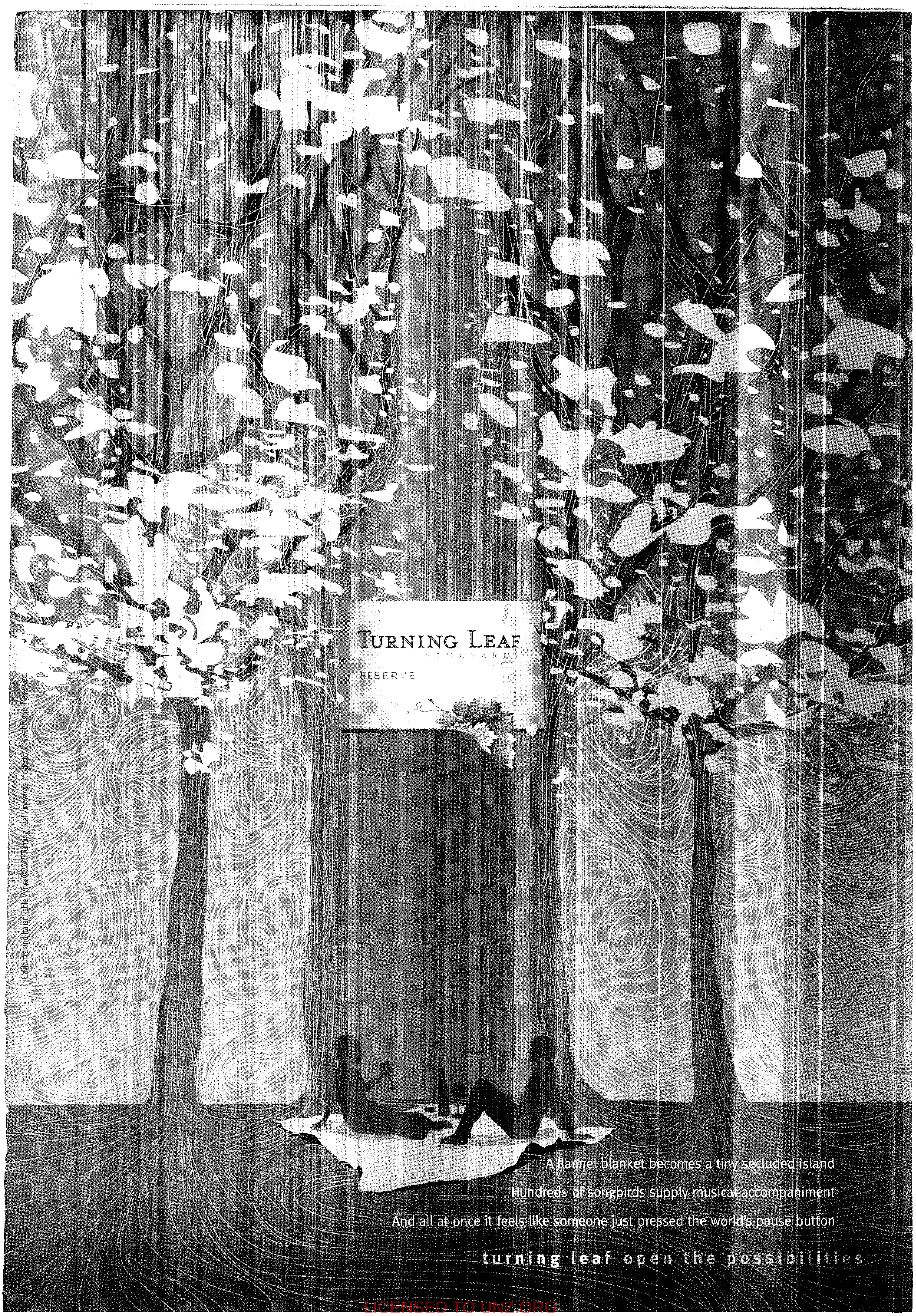
Volume LXXXI, No. 6, March 28, 2005. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for six combined issues: Jan. 24 & 31, Feb. 14 & 21, June 13 & 20, July 11 & 18, Aug. 8 & 15, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. David Carey, vice-president and publisher; William Li, associate publisher; Ronda Carnegie, advertising director; Gail Day, advertising director; Marie Wolpert, advertising director; Jamie Engel, sales development manager; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; Bob Gruters, marketing services director; Ilene Danuff, director of integrated marketing; Douglas Chilcott, associate creative services director/promotion; L. Paul Robertson, associate creative services director/events; Rosemary Stanton, advertising business director; Edward Klaris, general counsel. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Steven T. Florio, vice-chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.O.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.F.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684; call (800) 825-2510; or e-mail subscriptions@newyorker.com. Four weeks are required for change of address. Please give both new and old address as printed on most recent label. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks of receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Gail Day or Marie Wolpert at (212) 286-5611. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, www.newyorker.com. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail covers@cartoonbank.com. For Permissions and Reprint requests, please call (212) 286-8349 or fax requests to (212) 286-8628. To receive your issues without scent strips, please e-mail scentfree@newyorker.com. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online: www.newyorker.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines on the World Wide Web, visit www.condenet.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING. MANUSCRIPTS, ART WORK, AND OTHER MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

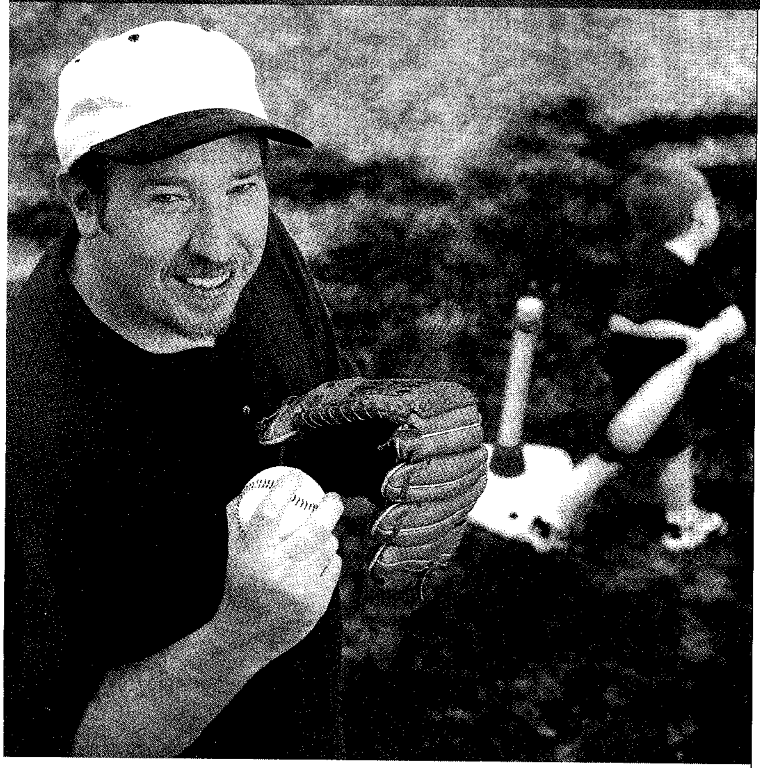
RATIONAL EXUBERANCE


My! This brisket is edible!
As of now, I'm not in chronic pain!
Whatever we're watching is not so bad that it makes me wish I'd never been born!
R. Chast


TURNING LEAF
VINEYARDS
RESERVE
A flannel blanket becomes a tiny secluded island
Hundreds of songbirds supply musical accompaniment
And all at once it feels like someone just pressed the world's pause button
turning leaf open the possibilities

California and Italian Table Wine ©2005 Turning Leaf Vineyards, Modesto, CA. All Rights Reserved.

Novartis and John drove his Cancer into remission in 56 days.



"I didn't think I'd live to teach my son to hit a baseball. Now I believe I'm coaching a future major leaguer." — John Nesbitt

Two months after his son Christian was born, John Nesbitt was diagnosed with cancer. He lost weight, his energy and his dream of one day teaching his son to play baseball. Today, John has his dream back and he is out on the field living it. Novartis is proud to be the innovative force that's bringing new optimism and hope to patients and their families. No one can promise what the future holds for cancer patients, but today John is winning the fight against his particular form of cancer, enjoying a good quality of life and realizing his dreams.

Think what's possible.

NOVARTIS

www.us.novartis.com